

Chatfield College • Acid Mine Drainage & Art • Milk Strikes

NOW & THEN

THE APPALACHIAN MAGAZINE

THE CENTER FOR APPALACHIAN STUDIES AND SERVICES • EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Volume 14, Number 3 • \$4.50

Northern Appalachia

Articles, Essays,
Fiction, Poetry,
and Reviews



Three Views of the Monongahela

1. Woman

smoke, soot, sulphur-stink—
how did she come to this place
but falling? In love
with the black-eyed man
who claimed her with his fists
and a knack for making her
laugh despite the sorrow of this
barren slag where nothing grew
beside the orange-slime-rock
poisoned river,
now she dreams
the weeping and
it calls to her, milk-weary,
sore, as she warms
the bottle at the stove,
puts the cat out for the night,
bolts the door. Headlights
crisscross on the ceiling;
the pulled chain ticks
on the dark bulb
like a burned-out star.

2. Warrior

"Money go to hell-a"
is how the river got its name—
the punchline of the joke
he tells; two Indians on a boat.
He laughs and downs a beer
before the bar
clears out and the graveyard
shift clocks in and the
river sizzles like a fat steak
with each quench of steel
going down; "Money go to hell-a"
or the company house:
no way out of the coke plant
but to do what Joe did—
Namath or Montana—
not everybody can
not everybody wants
it bad enough
when the money's good
and off-days are his own
to high-roll on the town
cash checks
take bets
smoke dope and cruise
the back roads
in his brand-new Dodge.

3. Monongahela

the river speaks
the ancient drumbeat
of the waves beating rock;
it speaks of wind and earth
and sister stars that jewel
a harvest moon;
it is the tale of warrior
and woman, the far-flung
star trailing light
into the darkling world
until she went,
leaving man and borrowed
years to plug again
the heavens with her light
and stop the rain of sisters
grieving for that empty space,
spilling lather in a restless sea.

—Kathleen Hellen

Kathleen Hellen, who resides in Princeton, W.V., took her inspiration from the steel industry's boom-and-bust cycles as well as from the mythos of the Monongahela River and its links to Iroquois legend. The Monongahela cuts through West Virginia's and Pennsylvania's steel valleys. Hellen's poems and stories have been widely published. She is winner of the 1994 and 1996 James Still Poetry Awards given by the Appalachian Writers Association.

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NOW & THEN

THE APPALACHIAN MAGAZINE

*"Northern Appalachia is something of a mystery
to those of us who grew up in Southern or Central Appalachia."*

— Sandra Barney

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Distant Relatives

Whenever I leave the Center of office to give a talk, I always take along a map of Appalachia, mounted on foam board, lightweight but just large enough to make me look a little silly as I stagger sideways out the door. At some point early in the presentation, I whip out this map that shows, among other things, the 399 counties in 13 states included in the Appalachian Regional Commission's definition of the region. It's a guaranteed attention-getter. Audience members lean forward, and someone invariably murmurs, "I had no idea Appalachia went up that far."

Does Appalachia in fact go up that far? This issue is dedicated to exploring that question.

I think it does. There are differences between Northern and Southern Appalachia, to be sure. The original Scotch-Irish and German populations who settled all along the mountain chain were joined in the North around the turn of the century by later waves of immigrants from Great Britain and from all over Europe. These waves by and large didn't make it much farther south than the West Virginia coalfields. In Northern Appalachia, then, the Celtic names are as likely to be Irish as Scotch-Irish, you'll hear an accordion

more often than a banjo in community halls, and onion domes are scattered among the steeples of many a town. Besides, there's no escaping the fact that they talk funny up there.

Historian Sandra Barney reports in "Coming to Terms with Northern Appalachia" (p. 8) that her Central Pennsylvania students at Lock Haven University, coming as they do from largely agricultural counties, see little of themselves in the experiences of West Virginia coal miners. But they might well have something to talk about with the farmers of Northeast Tennessee's numerous agricultural valleys. And those West Virginia coal miners would probably have much in common with the citizens of Wilkes-Barre who are, as Kenneth C. Wolensky describes in "Diamonds & Coal" (p. 20), still trying to fashion a viable way of life after the anthracite coal industry's collapse.

Look north, and you'll see labor struggles, mine disasters, and what historian and planner Allan Comp in "The Art Thing" (p. 25) terms the "vast post-World War II economic free fall of the region." That free fall gave rise to a list of problems enumerated in Douglas Macneal's

"How Can You Call Pittsburgh Appalachian?" (p. 10). He had Appalachian Pennsylvania in mind as he drew up his list, but some or all of the problems are all-too-familiar to communities throughout the region: "double-digit unemployment, stream pollution, out-migration of the young and long commutes by workers, low incomes, falling tax revenues, and collapsing infrastructures."

But look to the north, and you'll also find people with a deep attachment to "the land that had fed, sheltered, worried, and buried the bodies of my ancestors for generations," to quote poet Julia Kasdorf in "Mountains, Valleys, and a Place to Begin" (p. 3). You'll spy Chatfield College, a small Ohio school serving its rural population with a make-do-or-do-without strain of higher education distinguished by the value it places on personal relationships.

Yes, look north, and you'll surely find Yankees with odd accents, but if Northern and Southern Appalachians take a close look at each other, I would venture to guess that they might also find some folks who look suspiciously like distant relatives.

— Jane Harris Woodside, editor

A letter to the editor:

West Virginia Jokes

Since you solicited comments about the "West Virginia jokes" (*Now & Then*, Spring 1997, p. 13), here's mine:

Would you publish something like this?

And Now, With Apologies to Wops...

How many Wops does it take to change a light bulb?

What's a light bulb?

Does an "apology," a disclaimer, "artistic license," or calling something "satire" give the publisher license to print anything? I don't think so.

I was at a picnic in Ohio a few years ago. Some folks there started telling West Virginia jokes. I laughed right along with them, up to a point. After one fellow had

told a particularly vulgar and offensive one, similar to yours about the divorcing brother and sister, I laughed boisterously and slapped him on the back so hard, he about swallowed his tongue. I bellowed, "That's funnier than hell! Hey, here's one for you! What's the difference between West Virginians and a bunch of horses' asses?"

They didn't find it very funny when I said, "The Ohio River."

It's not that I can't take a joke. I can.

Letters to the editor should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to: Editor, Now & Then, East Tennessee State University, PO Box 70556, Johnson City TN 37614. Letters may be edited for length and clarity before publication.

Which reminds me of a conversation I had recently when I met "Ol' Charlie" on the street.

"Hey Charlie, where you been? I haven't seen you for a coon's age."

"Oh hell, I been in jail down in Tennessee."

"What'd they get you for?"

"Oh hell, they stopped me in a road-block and searched my car."

"What they find? A pistol? Corn likker? May-ree-ji-weenie?"

"Oh hell, worse than that down there. Somethin' they don't allow in the state."

"Well, what?"

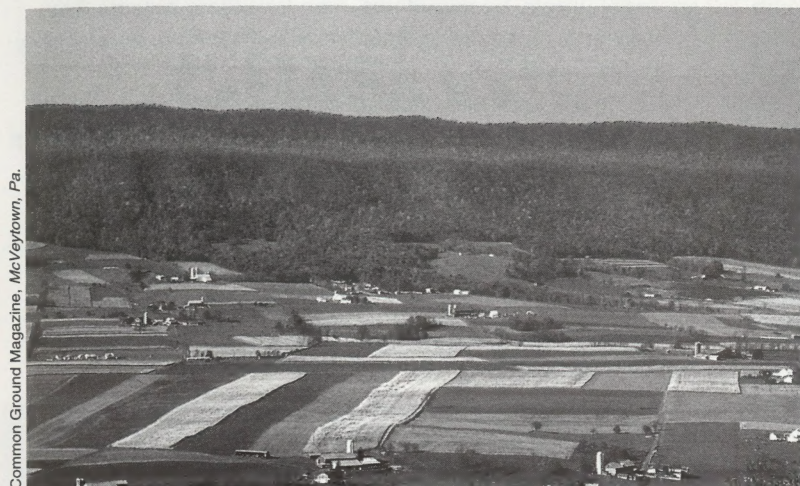
"Books."

Dan Cook
Hurricane, W.Va.

Mountains, Valleys, and a Place to Begin

by Julia Kasdorf

A poet finds a spiritual home in the Pennsylvania valley of her Amish and Mennonite ancestors.



Common Ground Magazine, McVeytown, Pa.

The Kishacoquillas Valley in Central Pennsylvania.

Scientists believe that human beings first stood up and began walking on the Serengeti Plain, but I cannot shake my sense that life began in a valley. In my imagination, the Garden of Eden is bounded by mountains that are as green and worn as the Appalachian ridges of Central Pennsylvania, where a prehistoric collision of two continents created peaks that were once as high as the Himalayas. Now they form gentle shapes with names like Jack's or Standing Stone, mountains known simply as Front Mountain and Back Mountain by those who live between them in the Kishacoquillas Valley, south of State College and north of Lewistown.

The inhabitants of that fertile valley — thirty miles long and no more than five miles wide — call it "Big Valley" or, simply, "the valley." They draw their bearings from ridges: Back Mountain is not quite north, and Front is nearly south.

Actually, the valley does not run true to the compass at all, so the sun always rises and sets slightly askew. When they leave, former residents struggle with a shaky sense of direction for the rest of their lives. They always consider themselves to be from the valley, no matter how long they've lived elsewhere or how far from tradition and family they've traveled.

I do not know when I first came to love the valley. Perhaps its dairy farms and forested ridges inscribed themselves on my consciousness as soon as my eyes grew strong enough to see beyond the arms of my mother. As a gosling will claim for a parent whatever barn cat wanders into view, I fixed my gaze on the land that had fed, sheltered, worried, and buried the bodies of my ancestors for generations.

According to legend, Amish settlers sailing up the Susque-

hanna and Juniata Rivers in the 1790s could tell by the taste of spring water when they had found limestone soil. They were immigrants and the children of immigrants who had made the Atlantic crossing prior to the American Revolution, fleeing European laws that forbade them freedom to worship, own land, or bury their dead in cemeteries.

My parents were the first in each of their families to leave farms in Big Valley, although there are stories from every generation about the ones who "went West." At a cousin's wedding, I complained to one of my plain-dressed great-aunts about the clear-cut lumbering that has left hideous scars on mountainsides in recent years. "You like these mountains?" She eyed me doubtfully through rimless glasses. "You know, *Daadi* didn't love the mountains like we do. That's because he grew up in Nebraska."

Great-grandfather Yoder was born in an Amish community that had migrated from Juniata County and eventually failed in a

I learned to associate mountains with meanings that reach beyond timber and rock to the boundaries of human community.

prairie drought. An adventurer, he'd stopped at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair on his way back to a landscape he could not have fathomed, having grown up on the flatlands. He died an old man in Big Valley, perhaps still chafing at the confines of landscape.

Although my parents moved away from the valley before my first birthday, I always regarded it as our real home, more home

than the scrappy hills of Western Pennsylvania where I was growing up among grandchildren of millworkers and miners. Our theology implies that Mennonites are pilgrims, but I knew that there was a place where we'd always belonged.

We returned often to observe those occasions that bind individuals to history and kin — weddings, funerals, family reunions — and always the mountains received us in an ambiguous embrace. Driving through what people call “the tight end,” barely wide enough for narrow Route 655, my father would moan, “Oh, the mountains” or “It’s like returning to the womb.” And my mother would gently retort, “John, it’s stifling.”

Savoring this ritual from the back seat, slightly carsick, I learned to associate mountains with meanings that reach beyond timber and rock to the boundaries of human community. I

At some level, I'd already learned that being related to a people can make you belong to a place.

learned to connect a certain queasiness with limits — and to love and resist them.

Out of respect for traditional relatives, I always wore dresses with sleeves on those visits, having learned early to accommodate a conservative code of dress and behavior. I regarded that world with a nostalgia unusual in children who are too young to have lost very much. Already, a mystical valley had been carved within me, forged by a stream of desire — my own and the longings of Amish and Mennonite kin who wanted me always to belong there, to belong among them, although I was clearly growing up outside.

Once, when I was playing in the creek that runs past my grandparents' place in the valley, a milk truck stopped on the bridge. The driver called to me, guessing that I must be a “Fresh Air.” I knew what he was talking about — every black or glamorous, worldly child in my grandparents' snapshot album had been transported from New York City by the Fresh Air Fund. These outsiders feared cows and country darkness; they grew inexplicably homesick for crowded apartments and sweltering streets, though some of them came to love the valley. A pair of girls from the South Bronx returned to my grandparents' place every summer for six or seven years during the 1950s. When I moved to New York City myself in the 1980s, my grandmother urged me to get in touch with those twins, grown up and living in New Jersey, but I never did.

“No!” I shouted indignantly to the man in the milk truck, incensed that he'd guessed I did not belong to that valley. “I’m not a Fresh Air! I’m John and Virginia’s daughter!” At some level, I’d already learned that being related to a people can make you belong to a place.

Land, when it has sustained families for generations, does not easily let go of a body. I realized this several years ago, climbing out of a car in New Hampshire, states away from where I was born, as the scent of hemlock woods and newly mown hay rushed into my lungs and struck something behind my sternum: the valley within me, my inspiration.

“Place is the true core of the universal,” wrote poet William

Carlos Williams. That summer, I finished my first book in a landscape that kept Big Valley and its people at the center of my imagination. I wrote poems to remember those mountains, but also to cross them so that they would not always be barriers dividing my life between the valley where I was born and the world I had chosen to roam. I sought words to name a place where eloquent language is suspect because the deepest meanings are conveyed in silence among kin — a ham left on the doorstep, a pressed hand. I wrote for myself and for those who are made uneasy by mountains, who love them because they give gorgeous form to the land and who hate them because they get in the way.

Mountains set limits, mark endings and beginnings, remind you that only when you cross them can you look back and begin to see the place you’ve come from. **Not**

*An assistant professor of writing at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa., Julia Kasdorf is the author of two collections of poetry, both published by the University of Pittsburgh Press: *Sleeping Preacher* and *Eve’s Strip Tease*.*

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Rattleweed

—for Vic and Danny

Men who stay with their mountains
understand the beauty of the useless.
They know a cold stream whispers all night
but the words are indiscernible.
They know the difference between fire pink
and a half-bought sun, and which not to eat
and which can climb the break of a hill
and leave a ribbon of soft flame ten miles long.

Men who leave their natural state
only long enough to drive freeways to classrooms
to teach roomfuls of people things they don’t
care to know, understand that rattleweed won’t
cure anything but the bite of curiosity, and so
each evening are content to walk amid sloping
fields and run the slick hands of snakeweed
along their trouser cuffs, comfortable
in its stretch and its pull.

Men who live in Tennessee and West
Virginia travel widely and return with brief
cases full of empty pages, bloodroot, and the gift
of knowing one is always born of the other.
Their voices are low and settle into the valleys
like fog bedding down for the night. On porches,
they’re content, the songs in their heads always
slow, and usually from the fifties, their shoes
are sleeping dogs.

—Pamela Steed Hill

Pamela Steed Hill grew up in Kentucky, earned a master’s degree in English from Marshall University, Huntington, W. Va., and moved around some before settling in Columbus, Ohio. She is an academic advisor and instructor at Ohio State University. Hill’s poems have been published in over 60 journals and magazines.

Elusive Neighbors

Essay by Elizabeth Brooks

Photographs by Jeff Behm

A writer renews her nodding acquaintance with the Amish.

When I was a child in the Western Pennsylvania town of Ellwood City, my parents would pile us into the family station wagon and head north for a Sunday drive. For what seemed like hours, we would glide over the rolling hills, past farms and spectacular autumn foliage. Along the way, we would see simple white farmhouses accented with blue doors; dozens of buggies gathered for Sunday worship; hayfields dotted by trademark stacks; children dressed in their odd, dark clothing, eating homemade ice cream while their parents busied themselves indoors. It was then that my father would slow the car to a crawl, and we would all try to grab a quick look at our most elusive and fascinating neighbors: the Amish.

Some 25 years later, I live in the borough of New Wilmington, Pa., some 15 miles due east of Youngstown, Ohio, amidst 1,500 Westminster College students, several more thousand full-time residents, and about 2,000 Old Order Amish, one of the nation's largest populations. I see the Amish women in the grocery store: still-young girls with babies on their hips accompanied by barefooted toddlers staring up at my loose hair and blue jeans. I watch the young Amish men "cruise" the town on a Saturday night, corncob pipes clenched between teeth, reins slapping the rears of their stubborn horses as they talk back and forth in a language I'll never understand. I shiver outside the auction barn amidst a sea of black hats and coats and beards and feel conspicuous in my bright red Eddie Bauer fleece pullover. What must the Amish think of us English?



© Jeff Behm, 1989

All Arms & Legs.

The Amish shun the outside world. Central to their religious philosophy is the belief that it is necessary to separate themselves from the world in order to live a more simple life, ignoring the trappings and temptations of the 20th century. Through simplicity, humility, and hard work, the Amish worship God and strive for eternal life after death. Theirs is a world devoid of electricity, automobiles, public schools, modern medicine, and zippers.

In the first quarter of the 18th century, a group of Amish seeking religious freedom emigrated from the Rhineland-Pfalz region of Germany to settle in a place known as a haven for religious castaways. Named Penn's Woods, the lush commonwealth was founded by William Penn, a devout Quaker with deep personal convictions about religious freedom.



© Jeff Behm, 1990

Harvest Heat.

One fall evening, having recently moved back to Western Pennsylvania from a major metropolitan area, I sat on my front porch, wrapped in an afghan. Within minutes, an Amish buggy rode past the front door. "Evening," said the young man at the reins. "Nice night," I replied, smiling. He stroked his beard for a moment and returned my smile. "Doesn't get much better than this."

As the clip-clop of the horse's hooves grew distant, I thought about our exchange. Above me, the stars filled the sky. The air was cool, with a hint of winter in her bite. Inside, my children played Scrabble in their pajamas.

I smiled. He was right. It doesn't get much better than this. **N&T**

Fields at Sunset.



© Jeff Behm, 1992



© Jeff Behm, 1991

Old and Older.

Elizabeth Brooks is a free-lance educational policy researcher and author who spent many years living away from her Western Pennsylvania roots. She recently relocated to New Wilmington, Pa., where she resides with her family.

Jeff Behm decided 12 years ago to walk away from a successful career in corporate America and follow his dream of making a living from photography. Now with a national reputation as a commercial and advertising photographer, Behm still finds it is the natural beauty of the found moment that most reminds him of his photographic roots and keeps fresh the creative energy his work requires.

Amish January.



© Jeff Behm, 1991

Coming to Terms with Northern Appalachia

by Sandra Barney

Northern Appalachia is something of a mystery to those of us who grew up in Southern or Central Appalachia. Although my paternal ancestors have lived in Appalachian Pennsylvania since the end of the 18th century, my Georgia upbringing and my education at West Virginia University did little to prepare me for a teaching job in Appalachia's northern reaches.

When I arrived in 1995 to join the history department at Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania, a state supported school of 3,400 in the north-central part of the state, I expected to find some recognizable variant of the Appalachia I knew. What I have found instead are students—and faculty as well—interested in thinking about how this place was connected to, yet different from, the rest of Appalachia. It became quickly apparent that any explanation or definition of the region would come, not from an outsider like me, but from the students and faculty who call this region home.

First Steps

With the enthusiastic support of a campus administration that recognizes the need for an articulation of regional identity among its students and employees and with the backing of the state administration that oversees the 14 Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education institutions, we set out to explore what it means to be Northern Appalachian. Fortunately, our efforts here at

Northern Appalachian Studies is doing its best to establish a foothold in the Central Pennsylvania mountains.

Lock Haven coincided with the launching of the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* project by East Tennessee State University's Center for Appalachian Studies and Services.

In September of 1996, Lock Haven hosted a state planning meeting charged with composing a list of appropriate Northern Appalachian topics for the *Encyclopedia*, with finding potential authors, and with fostering interest in the project. This meeting was critical in building ties between Lock Haven's faculty and others working in Pennsylvania and New York who are interested in Ap-

How do we encourage our students to embrace their Appalachian heritage when we are still struggling with the concept ourselves?

palachian Studies. Those in attendance discussed the possibility of creating a Northern Appalachian Network to act as an informal clearinghouse and to connect people interested in Northern Appalachian topics with information and with one another. That network is still in its early organizational stages.

This *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* planning meeting helped shape two other recent events. During the fall of 1996,

Lock Haven and the American Association of Colleges and Universities sponsored a series of workshops on the consequences of deindustrialization and

economic decline in Clinton County, the county in which my university is located. With the support of local clergy, activists, and labor organizers, historian Janet Irons coordinated presentations by state and regional scholars who discussed the Appalachian context in which deindustrialization was occurring in Clinton County. They noted that, on the one hand, Clinton County's economic base had been manufacturing and that there had been a longer tradition of higher wage jobs than is generally true in the rest of Appalachia. On the other hand, the trauma associated with the process of industrial flight as

those factories left Clinton County and headed south was similar to the experience of many Central and Southern Appalachian communities.

Finally, the university and the State System of Higher Education funded a week-long workshop in

May of 1997 devoted to the possibility of creating a Northern Appalachian Studies program. This seminar was intended to help participants consider and define Northern Appalachia, address methods and possibilities for teaching about the region, and explore ways of connecting the campus with the community by creating opportunities for students to learn while providing much needed services to the towns and people of Appalachia.

Faculty members from a number of disciplines attended the seminar. Along with English, education, and social work professors, historians, and political scientists, we were particularly lucky to have a number of scientists who introduced a unique perspective to the proceedings. Our workshop was graced as well by the presence of local historians and activists. These people spoke about the region with an authority that none of us who have only short-term experience possessed.

As a consequence of last spring's workshop, several faculty members are taking steps at Lock Haven to further the goal of establishing a Northern Appalachian Studies program. The Women's Resource Coalition, a student organization, has decided to sponsor social service projects in the mountain community of Renovo, Pa., this academic year. Students from the Newman Center, a Roman Catholic fellowship, are looking for opportunities to work in Appalachian Pennsylvania during spring break. Finally, the Physician's Assistant in Rural Primary Care program is continuing its community outreach to isolated settlements in Clinton County. At the same time, students in the Physician's Assistant program are producing for my Appalachian Health Care class histories of the communities being served.

Faculty members are drawing upon the knowledge they gained in the seminar to increase the Appalachian content of their courses and their research. For instance, political scientist John Washburn and music professor Glenn Hosterman are initiating a research project to analyze the importance of community musical groups in farming villages in Appalachian Pennsylvania. Faculty are also constructing new classes around Appalachian topics and increasing the Appalachian content of already existing classes. In the spring, for example, I will be teaching a Northern Appalachian history class for the first time.

While all of this success might suggest that Northern Appalachian Studies is becoming a reality at Lock Haven University, I would interject a warning against congratulating ourselves just yet. We are hardly the first to initiate programs of this sort, and the experience of our colleagues at institutions like Indiana University of

While all of this success might suggest that Northern Appalachian Studies is becoming a reality, I would interject a warning against congratulating ourselves just yet.

Pennsylvania in Indiana, Pa., stands as a cautionary tale. Several years ago, historian Irwin Marcus and sociologist Jim Daugherty seemed well on their way to constructing an academic program that centered on Western Pennsylvania's mining history. Due to changes in the administration and the shifting interests of their university, however, they were unable to secure the resources necessary to carry their innovative project to fruition.

cept of "Northern Appalachia" in Pennsylvania. In contrast to Central and Southern Appalachia, there is little agreement here on what actually constitutes Northern Appalachia. For some, the mining and labor history of Western Pennsylvania connects the Northern part of the region to the rest of Appalachia. If you

accept the notion that Appalachia and coal mining are synonymous, then Western Pennsylvania clearly fits the popular definition of Appalachia.

For those of us living in the non-coal producing regions of Appalachian Pennsylvania where agriculture is still a profitable enterprise, it is harder to see "Appalachia" when we look at the corn-

fields of Central Pennsylvania. By the Appalachian Regional Commission's definition, however, we are clearly part of the region. As we struggle to find the similarities and the differences between Northern Appalachia and the rest of the region, we can't help but raise questions about the danger of superimposing a definition that may or may not fit in a place that is quite similar to, but very different from, the rest of Appalachia.

Without research to help us define ourselves and to explore the ways in which Northern Appalachia fits in with — and diverges from — other portions of the region, it will be difficult to teach courses on Appalachia that are germane to our students. I have already discovered that my classes, primarily composed of students from Central Pennsylvania's rural agricultural counties, see little of themselves in the experiences of West Virginia coal miners.

Daunting Challenges

In an ideal world, both the difficulty of securing resources and the problem of definition could be addressed if a large regional institution possessing extensive resources would turn its attention to the question of Northern Appalachia. Unlike Kentucky, West Virginia,



Public Relations, Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania

Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania nestles in the valley of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River.

Farmers and Miners

Marcus and Daugherty's experience reminds us that the greatest disadvantage we face in trying to build Northern Appalachian Studies may well be the lack of resources and support for the very con-

North Carolina, or Tennessee, the state of Pennsylvania possesses no large university that currently focuses on the Appalachian identity of its students or its location. The University of Pittsburgh, for example, has excellent resources reflecting labor history in the region but has no particular program devoted to Appalachia. Pennsylvania State University, located just 30 miles from Lock Haven, has a world-renowned rural sociology program, but no faculty members whose primary research concentrates on the region. Although researchers like rural sociolo-

gist Carolyn Sachs have examined conditions in certain Northern Appalachian communities, the context is global, not regional.

Those of us thinking about Northern Appalachia, therefore, face several daunting challenges. How do we encourage our students to embrace their Appalachian heritage when we are still struggling with the concept ourselves? How do we assign seminal articles when critical analyses of Northern Appalachia are scarce, if not nonexistent? How do we wrest resources from state agencies and research institu-

tions when the legitimacy of the topics we seek to scrutinize is under debate?

Ultimately, I suppose, folks living and teaching and writing about Northern Appalachia are in essentially the same place other Appalachian scholars and activists were 30 years ago. As we continue our work, it is just possible that we may come to understand Northern Appalachia as a unique subregion at the same time that we enrich the larger field of Appalachian Studies. **NET**

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How Can You Call Pittsburgh Appalachian?

by Douglas Macneal

A writer puzzles over the origins and meaning of Northern Appalachia.

One hundred, even 50 years ago, the idea of calling any part of Pennsylvania "Appalachian" would have baffled everybody. The state with the largest rural population in the nation lay full in the path of the mountain chain, of course, but so does New England.

When I was in basic training at Ft. Jackson in South Carolina, the PX counter top held three March of Dimes cans: one for "Rebels," one for "Yankees," and one for "Pennsylvanians." That's where the Keystone State belonged—in the middle of everything.

We Pennsylvanians are now lumped with Southern New Yorkers, Appalachian Ohioans, Western Marylanders, and most West Virginians into a group labeled



Courtesy of Douglas Macneal

This street in Rebersburg, Pa., is modeled on Philadelphia founder William Penn's Quaker city plan, with close-set houses fronting the street and doubling as shops for specialized trades.

“Northern Appalachians” by the dollars Congress has voted to the Appalachian Regional Commission since 1965. We find this label getting routine acceptance by out-of-state historians and economists, political lip service from regional politicians, and “yeah, whatever” acquiescence by each other. I can’t speak for all Northern Appalachians, but as a Pennsylvanian I ask: What has changed the way we see ourselves? Has the definition of Appalachia grown more inclusive? Has the state changed that much?

A Tale of Two Cities

To a surprising extent, the character of rural Pennsylvania has reflected the character of its eastern and western cities, first Philadelphia and then Pittsburgh. For the century-and-a-half before the Civil War, from 1700 to 1850, Philadelphia was the pivot around which revolved the economy, the culture, even the geology of the state. Pennsylvania’s coastal plain is downtown Philadelphia. Pin a string there, at the state’s lower right corner, and you can lay the rest of the state out in

three concentric quarter-circles.

Piedmont hills occupy the first, stretching across the Susquehanna River to the Blue Ridge on the west, as far as Allentown on the north. Next the sweeping

In the roaring 1920s, the struggling 1930s, the booming 1940s, Pennsylvania and Appalachia were going in different directions.

curve of Ridge-and-Valley follows I-81 from Harrisburg west and south to Hagerstown, Md., Winchester and Roanoke, Va., and beyond, with the highway keeping to the great limestone valley, the Appalachian ridges always in sight.

Beyond the folded ridges and rare water gaps waits a final zone. The Allegheny Front lifts its unbroken escarpment just beyond the center of the state. The passage-blocking front holds behind it nearly two-thirds of the state’s area, a mineral-rich plateau sloping gradually down toward Ohio and New York.

During Philadelphia’s vastly successful period between 1700 and 1850 as the

nation’s gateway and, briefly, as its capital, the City of Brotherly Love put its stamp on the character of the frontier not merely statewide but nationally. Quaker and German farms filled the rich quarter-circle of the Piedmont.

Market towns and county seats sprang up to support a dense rural population.

Modeled on founder William Penn’s Quaker city plan, with close-set houses fronting the street and doubling as shops for specialized trades, the

towns carried on a lively commerce with Philadelphia and Baltimore, trading produce for imports from Europe. Restless settlers seeking new land carried this hearthland’s folkways, its architecture, and the notion that land should be acquired by individual homesteads westward — across the state and then, as folklorist Henry Glassie has shown, down the Great Valley into Tennessee and across the Midwest to Iowa.

Philadelphia’s Backcountry

This first layer was overlaid by a second when the ribbon of Ridge-and-Valley mountains was Europeanized after 1750. Successive waves of Scotch-Irish frontiersmen bypassed Philadelphia on their way west from Ireland. The first generation followed the lure of land to the frontier — some as squatters, some as leaseholders on land speculators’ tracts.

They took the frontier outwards with them and set its tone, many selling their leases and moving (so the saying goes) as soon as they could sniff their neighbors’ smoke. The next generation, better tolerating the smell of chimney-smoke, bought up the leases and replaced their cabins with houses. The one-room log houses — part German, part Ulster, wholly American in design — being built on the Monongahela River in Pennsylvania in 1790 were also that same year being built on the Shenandoah in Virginia, the Holston in Tennessee, and the Kentucky River. This frontier culture unified the settled parts of the whole Appalachian region before it was known as Appalachia.

Regarding rural Pennsylvania as their colonizing ground from 1770 to 1830,



Print and Picture Collection, The Free Library of Philadelphia

Looking west along Elfreth’s Alley in Philadelphia, the streetscape is an example of the city plan that helped shape market towns and county seats in Philadelphia’s backcountry.

Philadelphia merchants were manipulating land laws to acquire frontier investment acreage. They speculated in farmland, capitalized scores of charcoal iron plantations in the Central Pennsylvania valleys of the Juniata River basin that made Juniata Iron famous worldwide, and formed “navigation associations,” building canals to bring iron and coal east out of the difficult terrain. Meanwhile, ambitious townsmen built stone houses and turned the log ones to summer kitchens, married their children to the children of other stonehouse dwellers, and took over the iron furnaces, canals, and local politics. Philadelphia’s mark on rural Pennsylvania — and to a degree, on the Upland South — was far more profound than the Tidewater’s on its own backcountry.

The last geologic zone is the Allegheny Plateau. Occupying two-thirds of the state, the Plateau was settled during Philadelphia’s dominant years only where farms lay within reach of the Ohio River. Its highland heart remained a region of hunters and raft-building lumbermen until 1850 and still later. Encircling this domain of hunters and lumbermen was an interior frontier that was left behind as the western line of settlement surged beyond the Mississippi. The Allegheny Plateau, of course, extends as the Cumberland Plateau through West Virginia into Eastern

Kentucky and Tennessee. The pattern of settlement found in Pennsylvania was much the same throughout the Plateau from New York to Alabama in the decades before the Civil War.

Enter Pittsburgh and the Industrial Age

Pittsburgh had existed since 1750 as a military post commanding the Ohio Valley. By 1790, agents of Philadelphia merchant houses had made it the gateway to Midwestern trade. A point of embarkation for settlers as well as goods, the town industrialized early because the cost of importing tools and building supplies — and the iron to make them — across the mountains from the East made it cheaper for the citizens of Pittsburgh to manufacture their own. Workers and tradesmen were largely Scotch-Irish, English, and German. Already the largest city in Appalachia by 1840, Pittsburgh came to regard itself as “the most Presbyterian city” in the country. But its days as ethnic and cultural outpost linking Philadelphia and the rest of Appalachia were numbered.

Just at the moment that railroads began to break the barrier of the mountains separating Pittsburgh from Atlantic ports and simultaneously opened access to Appalachia’s remote interior, the calamitous famine in Ireland made Irish labor

available in almost unlimited quantities. Anthracite coal camps east of the Susquehanna River, feeding the railroads’ sudden hunger for fuel in the 1840s and 1850s, were overwhelmingly Irish for this reason. The abuses they suffered at the hands of the coal barons forced Irish laborers to earn a reputation for organizing by the 1870s. To dilute their effectiveness, companies began to recruit levies of Eastern European laborers to fill company towns with strange tongues and what they hoped were more compliant ways.

Meanwhile, the Bessemer converter made cheap steel available after the Civil War. The steel was fabricated into barbed wire, train rails, and structural beams. The industry’s rocketing need for bituminous coal and coke opened the vast coalfields of the Plateau throughout the last quarter of the 19th century. Thus, at the same time that ethnic neighborhoods were forming along Pittsburgh’s three rivers to serve the steel mills, previously unsettled pockets on the Allegheny Plateau began to fill with mines, railroads, heavy industries, company towns — and low-cost labor.

As these pocket labor markets sent out calls, immigrants direct from the people-exporting parts of Europe supplied them. Throughout Northern Appalachia, soft coal company towns of the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s were largely Swede, Slovak, Hungarian, or Polish; heavy industry neighborhoods of the early 1900s, in Pittsburgh and in growing coal towns alike, were predominantly Italian. Each nationality, once settled, sent for relatives back home. Names, churches, eating places, lawn ornaments, quilts, hair color, and lodge halls of towns and ghost towns today switch endlessly across the state as a traveler passes from enclave to enclave of Old Country ways. In all this layered patchwork — where now one heritage, now another defines the local Northern Appalachian culture — Pittsburgh is the pattern.

Yesterday’s People vs. The Melting Pot

One hundred, even 50 years ago, the Appalachian cultural region we learned about in school was a place characterized by isolation and fierce independence, where folkways resisted popular fads, where the spoken language alleg-



Pittsburgh’s teeming waterfront, October 1929, just before the stock market crash.

Pittsburgh City Photographer Collection, Archives of Industrial Society, University of Pittsburgh

edly evoked Elizabethan speech sounds, where "yesterday's people" supposedly preserved a gene pool (except we didn't use the word then) of Scotch-Irish purity. Rural Pennsylvanians during those same years—in the heyday of "America's most industrialized state," birthplace of unions, and the arsenal of democracy—

sylvania. By the early 1960s, most Pennsylvania coalminers faced the prospect of moving from their hometowns if they wanted to find work, and the state was experiencing massive environmental problems left by the slumping extraction industries—timber and coal mining. Stories of economic hardship were echoing

south. The economic validity of this designation shows up, however, when Pennsylvania counties inside the Appalachian part of the state are compared with those outside the Appalachian part on a 1990 map of per capita income. The boundary between First World and Third World is clear—except for Pittsburgh.

In all this layered patchwork — where now one heritage, now another defines the local Northern Appalachian culture — Pittsburgh is the pattern.

made Pittsburgh their ideal in just as dated a way. But every feature Pennsylvanians prided themselves on was one more feature different from their perception of the Southern mountains.

Pittsburgh was the melting pot and the future. I absorbed this as a schoolchild out of *Life* magazine, war movies, car ads, sermons. Ethnic vivacity, blue-collar heroics, the massing of capital for ever heavier industry, Penn State engineers, the stink of coke and stench of steel, great Catholic, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Lutheran churches where mill owners and laborers worshipped together: the strengths of America were the strengths that let Pittsburgh bump Philadelphia after World War I as the city with the power to mobilize the rest of the state.

All this energy and optimism and purpose—the melting pot, the coming age—these concepts were not outright lies nor even hype. They were select generalities. In the roaring 1920s, the struggling 1930s, the booming 1940s, Pennsylvanians idealized the strengths that made us peculiarly American as those which were ushering in the future. At the same time, we saw the strengths that made Appalachia peculiarly American as drawing upon the past. In Pennsylvanian eyes, our state and Appalachia were going in different directions.

An Economic Region

Thirty years ago, a great change in perceptions began to take place. By the time the Johnson administration formed the Appalachian Regional Commission in 1965 to help wage war on poverty, the future had arrived, and it blindsided Penn-

up and down rural Appalachia—double-digit unemployment, stream pollution, out-migration of the young and long commutes by workers, low incomes, falling tax revenues, and collapsing infrastructure. New times were calling for new generalities.

Pennsylvanians who 20 years earlier would have laughed at anyone calling them Appalachians were themselves discovering kinship with the region. Rural Pennsylvanians were even ready to call themselves Northern Appalachians.

The concept of "Northern Appalachia" was not one defined by ridges and plateaus and piedmonts. It did not start with a culture area. It started with a basic recognition: the Appalachian plateau and the ridges rumpling its eastern front from New York state to Mississippi were unified as a region by *economic* boundaries separating depression on the inside from the general prosperity beyond. Regardless of differences in culture—and in the way people had been used to seeing themselves—the subregions inside Appalachia are related economically.

By 1980, the collapse of the steel industry in the "Rust Belt" confirmed Pennsylvanians' sense of being an island of Third-World poverty in a sea of First-World well-being. Johnson's War on Poverty had termed 52 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties "Appalachian" in 1965, at a time when the poorest Pennsylvania counties equalled the wealthiest in Eastern Kentucky in per capita income. Even after the industrial collapse, incomes in Pennsylvania seem un-Appalachian in comparison with those of Appalachian states farther

Pittsburgh's Allegheny County is among the 52. How can you call a financial center indifferent to rural distress, where absentee landlords own Appalachian coalfields; a place where blue-collar culture rests upon ethnic diversity; an urban area—how can you call Pittsburgh, which is all of these things, Appalachian? Wherever you stand in Allegheny County—downtown, milltowns, or suburbs—the answer seems simple. You can't.

And yet, it is Pittsburgh that led the whole Allegheny Plateau straight from wilderness into the industrial revolution. It is Pittsburgh that showed Northern Appalachia how to gather immigrants off the train into pocket ethnic towns and neighborhoods; that collected, then invested the funding required for capital intensive enterprises throughout the area; that set the standard both for battlefields and union victories in the labor wars; that engineered the technologies that keep extraction industries alive and polluting.

It is Pittsburgh that followed Appalachia down the spiral of deindustrialization and is pioneering the rebound into the new world of postindustrial "adjustment," that is the pattern for, fellow-traveler with, sufferer of every highland county's dream and woe. When you want to understand Northern Appalachia, begin with Pittsburgh. **Net**

For the past 11 years, Doug Macneal has been editor of the Centre County Heritage, the county's historical journal. For five of those years, he served as the Northern Appalachian staff person for the Commission on Religion in Appalachia.

Water & Fire

by Nancy Flynn

*"Water and fire succeed
The town, the pasture, and the weed,
Water and fire deride
The sacrifice that we denied."*

—T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*

At the end of their too-long afternoon in the back seat of a '59 Chevy parked for eternity in the General Motors section of Tabbitt's Scrap Yard, Jane and her boyfriend Michael decided to take the short way home. They passed tires and couches, stoves without heat coils, toilets missing their tanks and lids. The strippings, too, were littered with mountains of castoff household junk, hardly out of place beside the scrabbly hills of unburnable coal layered with slate. It was hard to know how all of it got there — most of the old mining roads weren't in use anymore. Tufts of grass and thick weeds had grown up in the center, and ruts from trucks that traveled these roads, sneaking to the dump, had formed sharp cliffs with deep craters running alongside.

This was the first day it hadn't rained in over a week. Still, occasionally they came upon a pool of water, sometimes so wide it filled the entire road, and they had to detour, climbing up and over the mounds of culm and rotting timbers that bordered on the sides. It all led to the same place, the slag heaps behind Jane's house where a few giant machines continued to work around the clock, moving similar piles of waste to fill in every tunnel and shaft they could find. These were the openings that led to the Valley's honeycomb of underground mines, the ones that men like Jane's father and his own father before him and her grandfather on her mother's side, too, had worked until the world stopped needing ton after ton of slow-burning anthracite coal.

All that was a long time ago, before the Second World War,

at least according to Jane's father, Joe. He said that things had been on the downslide since the start of the century and certainly by 1919, the year he was born. Now, over a half-century later, in 1972, near the end of Jane's high school junior year, all that was left were these machines toothy as Godzilla, monsters that worked through the night to scoop and shovel and try to fill what it had taken over 150 years and many more lives to dig out.

Jane never remembered when her father had worked in the mines. Instead, she knew him as the Eden Mills fire chief, a quiet, relaxed man who sat in a swivel chair, smoking cigars and talking over the two-way, microphone in hand. Saturdays when she was younger — her sister, Eileen, at ballet and their mother, Grace, riding the bus to Wilkes-Barre where the doctors were still trying weekly sessions at the Shawnee Treatment Center — he used to take her along.

Saturday was his paperwork day. Doors locked behind them, the radio on, she'd sit next to him on a chair piled high with phone books so she could reach the top of the desk. He'd tear out a sheet from the back of his log book and hand her a pencil whittled to a point on the end. She'd watch as he entered dates, times, and the names of Eden Mills streets in the

All her life, Jane had been shadowed by the stories.

various columns and rows. Sometimes, she tried to copy what he wrote; other days, she'd scribble her own things, like their phone number and Grandpa Hugh's, along with a series of dashes and dots as if she were a spy and this was her secret code.

In the middle of the morning, Jane would be thirsty so they'd take a break and climb to the upper floor. They'd beeline for the kitchen, past neat stacks of folding chairs and tables, the ones Joe and the other firehouse volunteers set around the room every Wednesday for the Ladies Auxiliary Bingo Night. Along the wall was a huge refrigerated chest, red with a curvy white lid

and a thick silver handle that made it easy to lift. When Jane was small, her father would open the chest so she could hang from the edge and peer in. She liked to dangle her feet while she counted all the shiny green bottles of Coca-Cola that filled the cases inside. Then she'd jump down and go into the kitchen where a small glass bear stood on the counter next to the sink. She'd get the bear—it was a bank, really—and slip her nickel into the slot in its head, her coin falling to join the others at the top of the animal's knees. After she'd paid, Joe would hand her a soda and a skinny paper straw, which she'd remove from its thin, see-through wrapper now stuck to the moisture on the bottle's side.

If Joe had to stay a whole day, they'd pack sandwiches. After lunch and a second Coke, Jane would stretch out on the old Army cot in his office, the one where guys on the night shift rested when they felt tired and no calls had come in. Sometimes she pretended to sleep. Later, when she was older, her father would get the bingo cards and markers. She'd sit on the cot, spread them out, and play her own game—B16, I19, O72—until she'd used up every bright red disk and won.

Jane was there the day the Loree burned. The Loree was one of the oldest collieries in Eden Mills, built in the early 1870s by the Huber Coal Company on a small hill that rose behind her grandparents' house on Elm Street, directly below the Poke Hollow ridge. The site was near many of the oldest tunnels in town, the ones driven when coal was first discovered by John and Abijah Smith back in 1807.

Once the surveyors determined that richer beds could be found across Ransom's Creek and farther up into the hills, these early, more primitive tunnelings were left to subside. New slopes were driven, new chambers carved. It was like a contest, with all the contestants in a rush to be the first to find veins with names like Primrose, Diamond, and Mammoth. No one was quite sure of the prize.

Sure enough, these beds did exist miles underground, in thick wavy bands, frequently rising to the extraordinary height of fifty feet. In no time, there was talk of boring shafts instead of tunnels into the rock, much more dangerous and labor-intensive but certain to strike at the heart of the coal, suddenly valuable thanks to all the furnaces and foundries near Philadelphia and New York. Not long after, the Huber Coal Company built its first breaker near the site of the deepest shaft. That was the Loree, named for the recently widowed Mr. Huber's wife.

By the time of the fire in 1963, the Loree had been closed for over thirty years. After the stock market crash, the owners, a railroad company from New Jersey who'd bought out the Huber family holdings a couple of years before, couldn't afford the insurance, let alone repairs for even simple things on the surface like the flywheel that regulated the mine's flow of air. As a result, it sat idle, *No Trespassing* signs covering the huge, padlocked gate that had once been the entrance for hundreds of miners heading to a day of work. Then, the land and all the un-

derlying mineral rights were sold to a scavenging operation in Scranton. It was while this company was preparing to start its stripping that the old tippie and the wooden chutes leading back to the ground caught fire.

No one knew how it started. Someone said the strippers left behind explosives, maybe a stick of dynamite that they thought had a bad fuse, and kids broke in and got to their usual fooling and accidentally dropped a match. Others said it was arson, revenge, old guys from the union, permanently mad about the closing and the loss of jobs so many years before. Jane's father, Joe, said it was because the building was old and so long abandoned that the upper floor had rotted and there were holes every place you stepped. Over the years, the windows had been target practice for all the neighborhood boys so that every time it rained, more water got inside, flooding the idle machinery until even the air outside the colliery choked you with the smell of rust. It could have been as simple as lightning. After all, it was summer, that muggy part of July when the sky darkens and thunder starts its low, faraway grumble and everyone hopes the air will cool but it only heats up again, worse than before, once the rain is done.

That day, Jane had actually fallen asleep. When the phone rang, she was dreaming, something about the bingo markers and gluing them to her body as part of her campaign to scare her

Jane would never forget her voice. "You know those men killed up at Knox? Well, they aren't really dead. I know it for a fact."

mother into thinking she had an incurable disease. She was barely awake when she heard her father on the phone. She opened one eye and saw him scribbling on a piece of paper, all the while repeating the words that the voice on the other end must have been saying: "Flames higher than the roof. The conveyor already gone. Wind up, northwest."

It seemed an instant before men were swarming the building, grabbing hats and boots and black rubber suits from a row of pegs that lined the wall. Her father was outside, pulling on boots himself and yelling to the men, pointing at things to take. The alarm was still ringing when the first engine whipped around the corner, a second close behind. Joe came back to shut it off and noticed Jane, cross-legged and silent on the cot.

Michael's real vehicle—a dented, splotchily painted Willy's mail jeep—was parked at the top of the alley behind Jane's house. According to an earlier plan, they ran to the passenger side and crouched low while Michael slid open the door. Jane climbed inside and scrunched down on the floor as Michael, now alone, sauntered nonchalantly to the driver's side. Many of Jane's neighbors were out, sitting and rocking on their back porches in the late afternoon sun. Old Mr. Hopkins waved from his yard, where he stood prodding his incinerator, filling the air with ashes and a curling black wisp of smoke.

With Jane hidden from sight, Michael drove slowly down the alley, past all of Jane's nosy neighbors and their flapping, gossiping tongues. Only after they were blocks away and the coast was clear did Jane move from the floor to her seat.

"We did it," she said. "No one knows I skipped school."

They headed across town to Michael's, one of three identical cottages in a grassy lane that followed the base of the dike, a literal stone's throw from the Susquehanna, which had been rising due to the week of rain. People thronged the narrow street, and David, Michael's brother, greeted them with an explanation the second they walked in the door.

Jane stared at the ring of hills bounding their town like the walls of a prison, forcing so many details of daily life toward a river now casually spilling its banks.

"Where the hell have you been? They're swarming the place, Mike. Streetlights on all day, the pumps never turned off, trucks coming and going, dumping piles of sandbags — it makes the house shudder like there's been a bunch of earthquakes." David and Michael's parents were both dead, and the brothers lived together in the family house where David at twenty-six seemed to have effortlessly adopted the parental role. He waved them in the direction of the commotion behind their house. "See for yourself."

In a flash, Jane found herself scrambling on David and Michael's heels, up one side of the dike and down the other, moving so fast, it felt like she was tumbling headfirst in the direction of the river where, indeed, pandemonium reigned in that normally tranquil world. Emergency vehicles with doors left open, their red, yellow, or blue lights stroboscopically flashing, sirens, bullhorned voices telling volunteers what to do, where to stand, where not to roam. And the general buzz of nearby crews, passing sacks of sand in what seemed like a mile-long bucket brigade. All of this was quiet compared to the river itself which gurgled, sucked, and roared in the channel below them, rising steadily, claiming everything in its path.

After minimal conversation with a few guys David knew from the hose company, the brothers attached themselves to the closest

group of sandbaggers. Michael motioned for her to join them, but Jane shook her head, turned, and climbed back to the top of the dike. There, Jane looked away from the crisis and stared, instead, at the ring of hills bounding their town like the walls of a prison, forcing so many details of daily life toward a river now casually spilling its banks.

The day the Loree burned, she and her sister, Eileen, had ended up at the home of Rita, their mother's only friend, not far from Michael's, down on the river flats. Rita decided the best place to watch was from the attic. The girls hauled chairs for themselves and Rita from the second floor and placed them in front of the window, sitting down to a perfect view. The tippie was now in flames. Fire peeked out every window and whipped around the sides. Metal sheeting that covered the upper part of the structure had melted, curling back, a misshapen smile. At least half of the coal chute had already disappeared. A small part was left near the staging up top, visible through the blaze whenever the wind would shift.

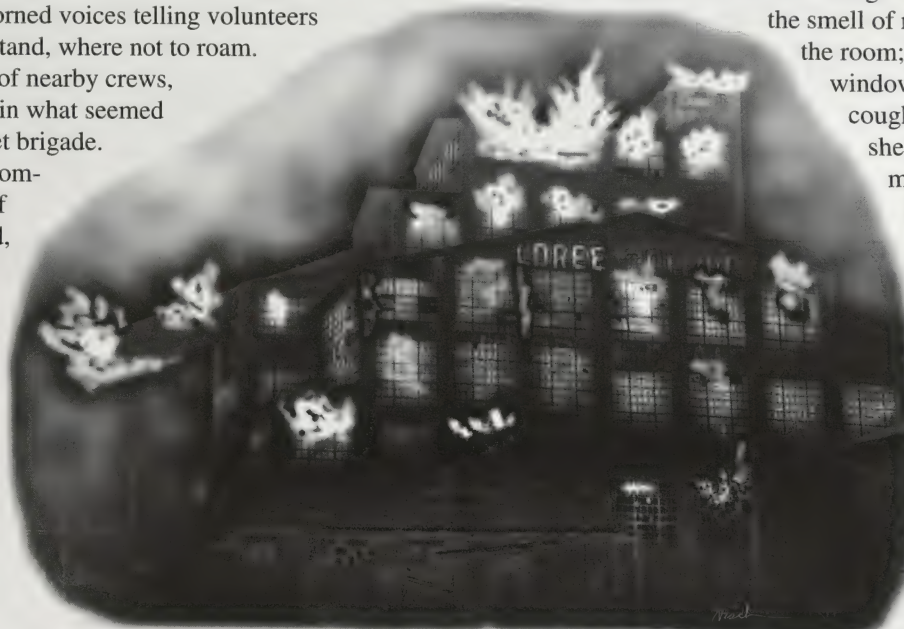
"It looks like a skyscraper before it's all built," said Rita, who'd never let you forget she once lived in New York City, "where all you can see are girders and scaffolds and huge moving cranes lifting the rest of the building materials up."

"I think it looks like a nose or a sliding board to hell," said Jane, covering her face in a futile attempt to keep away the smell.

They were still watching when the nose fell, a crash into the inferno below. They were still watching when the weather changed and the attic seemed to get hotter as if the heat were directed at them even though that was impossible — the fire was really quite far away. The air grew thick with smoke. Rita said that by now, any piles of coal left behind when the colliery shut down would have caught fire. That would explain

the smell of rotten eggs now filling the room; they had to shut the window when Eileen started to cough. After that, Jane swore she saw a flock of birds, or maybe they were bats, flying up straight and then in circles, hovering as if frozen, high above the showering sparks.

All her life, Jane had been shadowed by the stories: floods, fires, the mine subsidence they called cave-ins, even tales of ordinary people falling, trapped in the holes that



opened up, deep, unexpected, and often full of sour water, right in their own backyards. With a mother like Grace, such stories had been a simple fact of life. Jane spent years of her childhood listening to her mother explain beliefs and superstitions about everything from natural disasters to the proper way to tie your shoes for luck. If you went outside on an overcast day without a hat, something bad might happen, an accident that could have been prevented. Or if you cut down a sapling before it had a chance to bear fruit, the people who lived in the nearby houses would never have kids. To Grace, these were indisputable facts.

She'd been obsessed with catastrophe and random accident, what others would have called fate. She collected stories from the local papers and newscasts on the radio and would tell them over and over to anyone who would listen, all the time rearranging details to suit her current theme. Jane would never forget her voice. "You know those men killed up at Knox?"

Often Jane hadn't known what her mother was talking about, but she'd nod anyway, and Grace would continue. "Well, they aren't really dead. Their spirits leaped out of their bodies before the water could reach them. I know it for a fact. They've formed posses and live like savages, roaming the tunnels that go way out under the river and under the streets. They start fires. They're trying to smoke the rest of us out so they can keep on searching. And do you know what they'll find?"

She'd pause and wait a long minute or two for Jane to say, but she never would so Grace always got to answer. "Bones. Piles of burned-up bones."

Jane took a deep breath, drawing in a smell of mud and rain-soaked shoes. She surveyed the humble scene around her—laundry on the clotheslines, vegetable patches, the petals on a row of geraniums in a window box, and a cat asleep on the banister of a nearby porch. Rows of houses hemmed by crooked utility poles strung with what looked like four-lane highways of wire, homes of people who all knew her name, what year she was in school, the fact that her parents had courted in church, the rumors about why her mother was sent away. Linked by common stoops and walls and the painfully shared history of a hemmed-in crestfallen place. Her head throbbed. Soon, she too would plot escape.

But now, in this moment, Jane turned and slowly made her way back down the slope of the dike. Fireflies danced, and the buzz of cicadas and crickets seemed in syncopation with her feet as she swished through the tall grass before finding her place near Michael in the sandbagging line. By the light of the rising moon, the Susquehanna rushed forward, a river dark and troubled where it rose and touched land and yet, in a number of spots, alive with a fiery light. **NAT**

"Water & Fire" is adapted from Nancy Flynn's novel-in-progress, Eden Undone. This as-yet-unpublished work was the inaugural winner in 1993 of The James Jones Literary Society First Novel Fellowship, named for the author of From Here to Eternity. A native of Northeastern Pennsylvania's Wyoming Valley anthracite region, Flynn currently oversees general communications and technical publishing for Cornell University's information technologies division in Ithaca, N.Y.

Those Men Killed Up at Knox

by Robert P. Wolensky

On January 22, 1959, 81 first-shift employees reported to the Knox Coal Company's operations in Port Griffith, Pa., a small town midway between Wilkes-Barre and Scranton. Seventy-five headed to the May Shaft, the current hub of mining activity. Another six traveled to the interconnecting River Slope mine where the nearly exhausted workings were located alongside and under the Susquehanna River in the Pittston Vein, or "the Big Vein," as miners called it.

At about 11:20 a.m., two laborers in the Pittston Vein heard a sharp "popping" sound in one mined-out chamber. They quickly summoned veteran assistant foreman John Williams. "I no more than put my foot in the place and looked up than the roof gave way," testified Williams in his Scottish burr before a state investigating committee. "It sounded like thunder. Water poured down like Niagara Falls." Unbelievably, the Susquehanna River had somehow breached the River Slope mine.

Grim Facts

Three men, including Williams, sprinted up the River Slope entrance to the surface and saved their lives. The three others in this section, "rockmen" named Gizenski, Featherman, and Osproski who were driving a tunnel to a lower-lying vein, drowned immediately. The escapees quickly phoned Superintendent Bob Groves, another Scottish-born mining veteran, who ordered everyone out of the mine. As millions of gallons of water surged into the May Shaft, men scrambled to find an exit, some fording chest-high water to board one of the last lifts to the surface. The largest group of 27 employees wandered for seven hours

before making their way to the surface through an abandoned air shaft. All but 12 escaped. The victims ranged in age from Dan Stefanides, 33, to Sam Altieri and Francis Burns, 62. They left 42 dependents. These 12 men were never found, their remains entombed in the pit to this day.

During the first 64 hours of the emergency, some 2.7 million gallons of water per minute streamed underground from a massive whirlpool near the riverbank. In all, an estimated 10.37 billion gallons coursed into the mines. Work crews toiled around the clock for three days to plug the cavity. They dumped about 60 coal hopper cars—50 ton behemoths called gondolas—into the void. When this did not stop the flow, they added about 400 one-ton coal cars as well as some 25,000 cubic yards of dirt, rock, and boulders. Finally the chasm stopped drinking.

The Pennsylvania Department of Mines immediately funded a massive

pumping campaign to save the many adjoining operations. Construction crews placed 40 huge siphons at strategic shafts and eventually drained over 10 billion gallons. State and federal agencies spent nearly \$5 million on the disaster, most of it to pump the mines and, later, to divert the Susquehanna and construct permanent concrete-and-sand seals at the point of the breach.

Causes

How could it have happened? Government investigations discovered the immediate cause in two illegal chambers dug under the river and extending 125 feet past the officially designated "Stop Lines." Moreover, the chambers were quarried without the benefit of boreholes to determine the thickness of the rock cover (35 feet was considered the minimum) and without proper surveying. Miners obeyed company orders and quarried the two tunnels, following their coal at a sharp upward angle toward the riverbed until the rock cover dwindled to a mere six feet. The thin "roof" could not withstand the weight of the Susquehanna.

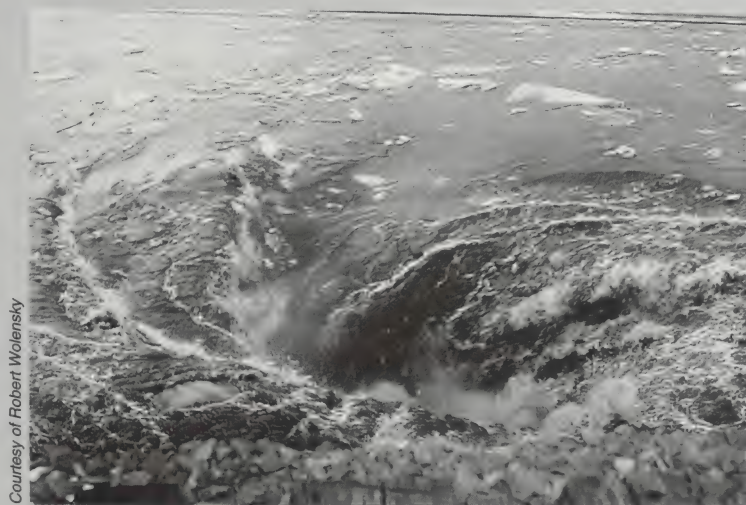
Company greed and ineffectual mining inspectors provided other answers. Penalties proved to have little deterrence value. The sanction for this type of illegal mining only amounted to a \$500 fine and a 90-day prison term. And then there was the criminal corruption at the Knox Coal Company involving both organized crime and the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

Not only was John Sciandra, one of the founders of the Knox Coal Company in 1943, named as the "top boss" of the region's organized crime family by the Pennsylvania Crime Commission, but prosecutors discovered that August J. Lippi, president of District 1 UMWA, had become a silent partner in the company in 1950 in flagrant violation of the Taft-Hartley labor law. Ten persons were indicted for criminal activities associated with the Knox case, including Superintendent Groves, but only Lippi and his partners, Louis Fabrizio and Robert L.

Dougherty, served jail time (Sciandra had died in 1949, but his wife and heir, Josephine, was indicted). It became clear that the Knox Coal Company had developed one of the most corrupt mining operations in the region's history. In these endeavors, the company was joined not only by the District 1 UMWA but also by the firm that had leased the River Slope to Knox, the Erie Railroad-owned Pennsylvania Coal Company, two of whose officers were among the indicted.

Aftermath

Despite its decline, anthracite still commanded a large share of the local economy. The 1958 production of 7,669,440 tons had a market value of \$76.9 million. With a predisaster unem-



The Susquehanna swirls through a breach in the River Slope mine.

ployment rate over twice the state figure at 11 percent and a median income at about 80 percent of the state average, each of the area's 11,636 coal-related jobs was valuable.

One estimate of the disaster's impact put the direct and indirect job loss at 7,500, with a payroll deprivation of \$32 million. Within months of the break-in, two of the area's largest coal companies—the Pennsylvania and the Lehigh Valley—announced a full withdrawal from the anthracite business. Their mines had been permanently damaged, company officials said. A potentially significant budgetary jolt also faced several local governments that relied heavily on coal tax assessments. Because of the Knox-related losses, the northern anthracite area would be forced to confront a

multitude of grave new problems.

Other companies whose mines lay some distance from the Knox continued to operate on a much smaller scale into the early 1970s. However, water from shutdown operations continued to build up, and the steep cost of pumping, along with mismanagement, continuing corruption, and anthracite's declining competitive position relative to fuel oil and natural gas, eventually killed deep mining. Billions of tons of anthracite are still in the ground but remain inaccessible because of underground flooding.

The Knox mine disaster has remained an important part of the region's history and consciousness. The tragedy is remembered by a gravestone in front of St. Joseph's Church in Port Griffith, a

marker engraved with 12 names. It is commemorated by a well-attended religious service every January 22. It is recalled by anniversary news stories and television interviews. How could citizens in this tightly knit community forget the tragic death of 12 mineworkers and the losses suffered by their families; the 60 massive railroad gondolas swallowed like bath toys by a raging whirlpool; the three-day sentry watch by multitudes gathered along the Susquehanna's banks; and the images of rescued men

climbing out of the ground, one after the next, as family and friends welcomed each with tears of relief?

Just as importantly, how could they forget the corporate and criminal causes of the fiasco? The aggrieved populace of Northeastern Pennsylvania still remembers the Knox disaster as a breach not only of the Susquehanna River but also of public trust in the mining industry, in its largest union, in government inspectors, and in the broader political economy that permitted such abuse. **N&T**

Robert P. Wolensky is professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. A Northeastern Pennsylvania native, Wolensky is the co-author with his brother Kenneth C. Wolensky of a forthcoming book on the Knox mine disaster (University of Illinois Press).

The Girard Theater

by Harry Humes

The movie theater is the only bright spot in a small, drab Pennsylvania coal town.

My sister took my younger brother and me there for the first time. It was close to Christmas. The ticket collector was dressed as Santa. There were two narrow aisles, rows of worn seats with arm rests. The floor sloped down to a stage and a thick red curtain. I have no memory of what the movie was that afternoon. I had no idea where the movie would happen. Would it come from the ceiling? The walls? Our sister told us it was waiting behind the curtain. Ah.

When I looked behind me, there were two squares cut high up in the rear wall. Below them, to the left, was the candy counter. The Italian girl who worked there knew my sister. She'd reached over the glass top and patted me on the head. Eventually, the lights dimmed, and the thick red curtain swayed and slowly pulled open.

It was called the opera house when my father was a boy, and that is what he called it all his life. The original opera house burned down before I was born, was rebuilt, burned down, built again. It stood on the corner of Main and Second Streets. In the same block were Tony's Restaurant, Ralph's Pool Room, a grocery run by an old woman everyone called Mae, and an electric appliance store run by the Umlauf brothers.

In an apartment in the same block lived the high school math teacher, a spinster feared by her students. Late on certain evenings, she played the pinball machine at the rear of Tony's Restaurant. At the opposite end of the block was Kelly's Bar, and directly across the street from the bar was the Methodist Church where my brother and I sang in the choir.

Second Street ran north and south, dropped steeply from the Reading Railroad tracks, crossed Main Street, and on down to the bridge, under which flowed an evil-smelling creek that was always black from the mines. Second Street had a dozen bars

along it, all of them always crowded. The most prominent was owned by Chick Fullis, who between 1928 and 1936 played major league baseball and in the 1936 World Series batted .400 for St. Louis. In Fullis' Bar, you could eat soft-shelled crabs, clams, oysters, crabcakes, drink all the beer you wanted, and listen to Chick tell of the big leagues. For the ladies, there was a special side entrance.

When I was in eighth grade, the woman who managed the theater offered me the job of putting up posters for coming movies. She was my mother's friend from the Dorcas Society and the Ladies Sewing Circle. I made one dollar a week, applied for a social security card, and was able to see all the movies free. I had landed, for a short time, in paradise. Once a week, a heavy package of posters would arrive that I'd unroll and put up in the glass cages beside the ticket booth.

In the late forties, the mines began to close. Television arrived in our town. Dress and shirt factories popped up, and wives went to work. Men stood on corners or played cards at the firehouse. The Girard struggled along. Eventually it became a roller rink. Eventually it became nothing at all.

What do I remember most? I remember the vast and haunted landscapes of westerns and the smallness of the cowboys who rode over them. I remember the gritty, shadowy streets walked by gangsters or private detectives, the toylike pop-pop of guns, men falling without any blood showing. I remember a scary series of movies about a man called Whistler, played by the actor Richard Dix. I remember smoochers in the back row. I remember sticky floors and coal trains that rattled through town and drowned out the movie. I remember coming out of a matinee into the drabness of my town and trying to hang on to the special lighted-up feeling of a movie. If you looked due east, you could see Packer Number Five smoking and rattling. It was the mine our father entered each day. It was the mine that got into our father's lungs and slowly suffocated him. I remember his pleasure

in musicals, in Betty Hutton, his laughter at Abbot and Costello. I remember being terrified when King Kong shook his pursuers off a log and how they fell screaming into a gorge. I remember thinking that if I stayed too long in that town, sooner or later something would begin to shake under me and down I would go. **N&T**

Harry Humes' recent books of poetry are *The Bottomland*, 1995, and *The Way Winter Works*, 1990, both from the University of Arkansas Press. A native of Girardville, Pa., he has published his short fiction in *Laurel Review*, *Quarterly West*, *Shenandoah*, and elsewhere.



The original opera house in Girardville, Pa., circa 1900. The theater was on the second floor of the building.

As the clock neared midnight on New Year's Eve, 1996, approximately 4,000 spectators huddled at Public Square in downtown Wilkes-Barre, Pa. A mainly blue-collar city of nearly 50,000, Wilkes-Barre is located in a wide Appalachian valley along the winding Susquehanna River in the heart of the anthracite coal region of Northeastern Pennsylvania. As the crowd collected in the square, an unknown number of their neighbors gathered around television sets in homes, bars, restaurants, and workplaces throughout the Wyoming Valley. They watched as local stations intermittently carried the event live, along with traditional New Year's Eve broadcasts from places like New York City and Las Vegas.

With seconds remaining before the clock struck midnight, a replica of a large piece of anthracite or "hard coal" began its 30-foot descent from the top of the new five-story office building bordering Public Square. The enthusiastic crowd clapped, shouted, hooted, and simply made a whole lot of noise. Demonstrating the creativity of modern technology, a huge outdoor television screen allowed viewers to watch the lump of hard coal

Wilkes-Barre makes headway in its efforts to reinvent itself in the decades following the demise of King Coal.

had planned and publicized this first-time event. They deemed it high time for Wilkes-Barre, the greater Wyoming Valley and, indeed, the entire anthracite region of Pennsylvania to shed its "coal town" image. The transformation of the coal to its more brilliant, distant cousin, the diamond, signaled a larger transformation for this community. As Wilkes-Barre Mayor Tom McGroarty put it, "The coal industry is a proud part of our heritage. We are paying tribute to our past and looking forward to a bright future."

From Boom to Bust

Like many parts of the Appalachian region, coal was once king in this 500 square mile area of the Northern Appalachians. By nature's happenstance, underneath these mountains and fertile river valleys lies the largest deposit of hard coal anywhere in the Western world.

region, spurred by the desire to create better lives. They asked simply for the opportunity to work.

Those opportunities came in the form of such difficult jobs as working as miners, laborers, mule tenders, breaker boys, and the like, blasting and digging out the coal in

dark underground caverns and hauling it to large surface collieries where it was processed for market. Work was dangerous. In addition to continual labor disputes and strikes, death and injury were ever present. Statistically speaking, on average one mine worker per day lost his life in the quest for anthracite from the late 1800s to the 1960s.

Distinct ethnic communities emerged, typically near a mining site. Irish and Italian peoples settled mainly at the northern end of the valley in Pittston. Nanticoke, some 25 miles away at the opposite end, was a hub for Polish and Eastern European immigrants. The towns and villages in between were populated with Welsh, Scotch-Irish, Germans, Slovaks, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Russians, and others. Along with the immigrants came their customs, traditions, celebrations, community institutions, and churches.

Diamonds & Coal

by Kenneth C. Wolensky

descend right along with its counterpart, the "big ball" in New York's Time Square. At midnight, the anthracite chunk reached the bottom of its pole where it was transformed into a bright, shiny, fully illuminated diamond.

Fireworks went off near the banks of the Susquehanna River, just two city blocks from Public Square. The crowd went wild, cheering, dancing, and singing "Auld Lang Syne." City officials and local public and private event sponsors beamed, sharing accolades, viewing the whole event as a success.

The valley was ushering in its diamond future. For months, city officials

From the late 1800s to the 1920s, the anthracite region's economy grew tremendously as coal companies, canals, railroads, and people became part of an expansive industrial complex designed to pull several hundred million tons of coal from the earth to fuel the industrialization of America. Unlike much of the rest of Appalachia which supplied bituminous coal to the nation and the world, the coal mined in places like the Wyoming Valley burned longer, was cleaner, and produced greater amounts of heat and energy.

By the tens of thousands, immigrants from places like Eastern and Southern Europe and the British Isles came to the

By the 1930s, as work began to dry up with the onslaught of the Great Depression, the anthracite region's economy quickly went from boom to bust. The region enjoyed a brief respite when the demand for coal increased slightly during World War II, but by the late 1940s, the coal industry was beginning to feel the impact of alternative energy sources such as natural gas and home heating oil. The popularity of such energy sources brought the coal industry virtually to its knees in the 1950s. Coal companies—never known by the citizens of Wilkes-Barre for their community-mindedness—invested their capital elsewhere. Thou-



Revelers celebrate a lump of coal's transformation to a diamond in Public Square, New Year's Eve, 1996.

sands of miners were unemployed. Wilkes-Barre was designated as an economically depressed city, one of two in the United States with an unemployment rate exceeding 15%. Scranton, some 20 miles up the road, was the other.

Like their forebears, many emigrated in search of work. Between 1945 and 1950, Luzerne County lost nearly 11 percent of its people, while Pennsylvania's population grew by over 6 percent. Former actor turned lawyer, then U.S. Rep. Dan Flood (dubbed "Dapper Dan" and widely recognized for his handlebar mustache, flashy dress, and impassioned speeches) liked to say, with a bit of disgust, "The region's greatest export is high school graduates."

George M. Leader, who in his mid-30s served as Democratic governor of the state from 1955 to 1959, remembers that "what happened after World War II was that the young people just left the area in droves. The anthracite region lost a good deal of that generation—at least the male population. Some went to Washington, others to Harrisburg, Pa., for the opportunities. They were able to move into a lot of jobs outside of the area, jobs that gave them the kind of security that they never could have had in the coal region."

Dismal Realities

Others stayed put, despite the bleak circumstances. The wives and daughters of miners occasionally gained employ-

ment in the garment factories which were beginning to come into the Valley from New York, attracted by the availability of inexpensive and abundant labor as well as by the dearth of labor unions. An occasional silk or textile mill might provide work as well. Still, many families were desperate.

"Here is the picture," explains Min L. Matheson, the leader of the Wyoming Valley District of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union from 1944 to 1963, a union whose membership consisted mainly of wives and daughters of unemployed coal miners. "A man works

in a coal mine and is doing fairly well. He takes out a loan and builds a home. His children attend a school built by him and others like him. His family attends services in a church which he helped build. His family has a stake in every facility which the area offers.

"Then the mine closes down," Matheson continues in a 1988 oral history interview. "His income stops. He registers at the employment service. There is no work available. He draws his unemployment compensation, but that runs out. What is he to do?"

Deindustrialization was a grim reality for thousands in the Wyoming Valley. As Leader recalled in his 1994 oral history interview, "In the anthracite region, the major issue has been the economy for as long as I can remember. There is nothing else to talk about or anything nearly as relevant to those people's needs than the economy." "Relief," as my parents called welfare benefits and other forms of government assistance, became an important source of income.

On the Road to Recovery

The Wyoming Valley's citizens were not a people to sit idly by while the ground was eroding beneath them—figuratively and, in some cases, literally as land over spent mines sank. By the mid-1950s, local business, government, labor, and community leaders fully activated an economic development coalition known as the "Committee of 100." Even-



Breaker boys play football in the shadow of Kingston Coal Company colliery, 1915.

tually numbering 228, the Committee was a focal point for reindustrialization and worked to attract businesses and entrepreneurs to the region.

In one example, the Committee combined its efforts with the local industrial fund to raise the money to purchase a 600-acre tract of land (at a paltry \$45 per acre) for the development of the Crestwood Industrial Park at Mountaintop, south of Wilkes-Barre. Together, they raised over \$700,000, mainly from private interests which included at least one local coal company. Local efforts combined with public initiatives in the effort dubbed "Operation Jobs."

In 1956, Governor Leader signed legislation to enact the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority. The statute was applicable to areas of Pennsylvania with unemployment rates greater than 9 percent and granted low interest financing to industrial concerns who agreed to locate in such hard-hit areas and hire local people. Conditions in the anthracite region inspired Leader to author the bill.

In 1960, Democratic Congressman Flood looked on as President Kennedy signed the Flood-Douglas Area Economic Development Bill into law. Flood's measure created the Area Redevelopment Administration (ARA) in the U.S. Commerce Department which provided federal grants and low-interest loans for enter-

No matter how much the social and economic landscape is transformed, there is a human need to hold onto some semblance of the past.

prises in depressed Appalachian areas. It also sponsored programs to train workers so that they would acquire the skills necessary for the new economic order. For example, RCA opened a \$2 million television manufacturing plant when Crestwood Industrial Park was expanded in 1965. When Luzerne County Community College opened its doors two years later to provide numerous low-cost programs to students, it made sure that electronics courses were among its offerings.

By the mid-1960s, the Washington,



Courtesy of ILGWU/UNITE

Many wives and daughters of unemployed miners went to work in garment factories like this one in the Wyoming Valley, circa 1945.

D.C.-based Appalachian Regional Commission assumed the duties of the ARA. Indeed, the era of public/private partnerships to aid economically distressed communities had arrived.

Agnes Comes to Call

Through the latter 1950s and 1960s, the Wyoming Valley's economy experienced a gradual comeback. Millions of dollars in government aid and private capital provided a desperately needed boost to the sagging economy. Industrial parks, manufacturing plants, and military-industrial concerns emerged, along with a scattering of health care facilities, institutions of higher education, suburban shopping malls, superhighways, and small businesses.

By 1965, Crestwood Industrial Park housed 14 new employers, companies such as Eberhard-Faber Pencil Company and Foster Wheeler Corporation, a manufacturer of heavy industrial and military equipment. All told, these companies created over 5,000 new jobs. In the early 1970s, Congressman Flood saw to it that the proposed Interstate 81 was rerouted through the heart of the coalfields to provide a vital transportation link. Originally, the road took a more southerly route through Pennsylvania, cutting a diagonal

east from Harrisburg to New York City.

By the early 1970s, the unemployment rate dropped below 5 percent in the greater Wilkes-Barre area, and the local economy appeared strong and growing. Then in 1972, tropical storm Agnes spanned the northeastern United States, dumping torrents of rain throughout Pennsylvania. The Susquehanna River at Wilkes-Barre, unable to contain itself, flooded the valley in what President Nixon called one of the worst natural disasters to strike anywhere in the United States. Despite the fact that, in the near term, thousands were homeless and damage climbed into the hundreds of millions of dollars, over the long run, Agnes proved to be somewhat of a boon to the greater Wilkes-Barre area. Federal and state aid combined with private investment to pump millions into clean-up efforts and large-scale urban renewal projects. As locals liked to say, the "Valley with a Heart" was coming back "better than ever."

A Mixed Blessing

During the 1980s and into the 1990s, the Wyoming Valley, like the United States generally, evolved into a service economy. Retailing experienced continual growth, as symbolized by the open-



Wilkes-Barre's Public Square, 1997.

ing of the area's first WalMart in 1994. The area has taken on a new face as a travel and tourism destination now that the state officially recognizes it as part of the Pocono Mountain region, famous for its vacation resorts, outdoor recreation, and historic sites, including Scranton's Steamtown National Historic Site, a multimillion dollar steam train museum operated by the National Park Service. Hospitals and nursing homes proliferated to serve the region's aging population. Also added into the mix are insurance companies, banks, federal and state government offices, and post-secondary educational institutions. So significant are the institutions of higher learning, in fact, that travelers driving on I-81 near Wilkes-Barre will see newly erected Pennsylvania Department of Transportation signs directing traffic to five in all.

The unemployment rate in Lucerne County hovers around 7 percent. Yet, this new economy has, arguably, brought mixed blessings. Stark contrasts are plainly evident to the watchful eye. Middle- and upper-income professionals — many of whom hold positions of responsibility in certain sectors of the service economy — reside in comfortable, upscale housing in areas surrounding the valley, like Back Mountain located just north of Wilkes-Barre. Yet, also plainly evident is what social scientists have come to call the permanent underclass, tucked away in valley towns and surrounding rural areas. Indeed, underemployment — a phenom-

enon frequently ignored in economic statistics and often difficult to measure — has become an indelible fixture. As one local historian put it, "Things have gotten better — for some."

Changing the Image

Along with these drastic economic changes, the once common images of life in this Appalachian community are fading quickly. Some symbols of the past, such as close-knit Eastern European neighborhoods dotted by onion-domed churches, still remain although their populations are dwindling. The coal mines, collieries, and the culm or waste banks, however, are disappearing. Even the textile and garment factories that took coal's place are either gone or are nearly extinct. Just this past September, the last unionized garment factory closed in the City of Wilkes-Barre, a victim of federal free trade policies. Thinning out, too, are the people whose lives and livelihoods depended first upon "King Coal," then upon the garment industry, manufacturing, and other successors.

More obvious are the signs of economic evolution. For example, on the site of a once large and vibrant mine where my wife's grandfather worked as a young man now sits a large shopping mall, a favorite hangout for the young. The mall is adjacent to the Veterans Hospital built in the 1960s.

The Veterans Hospital is a place with deep personal meaning since it is where

my father, a first-generation American and underemployed coal worker, gave up his fight for life in 1971 at the age of 54. The official state death certificate attributed his passing to acute pancreatitis caused by alcohol consumption. To his three sons, daughter, and widow, he more likely succumbed to the larger stresses of life in the shadow of the demise of anthracite. But official state records don't leave enough space to record this type of information.

Today, Wilkes-Barre and Wyoming Valley leaders are working to modify the Wyoming Valley's image from a coal town to an area with a diversified economy buoyed by a people with a strong work ethic. They desperately desire, with all good intentions, to instill a new vision for the future.

Diamonds seemed like a natural choice. After all, anthracite will presumably turn to diamond following several thousand more years of natural compression and decomposition. And, following several decades of the transformation from coal to manufacturing and then later to a service-based economy, city leaders have strong hopes for a prosperous future for the Wyoming Valley — one which

The economic transformation of Wilkes-Barre and the Wyoming Valley might well contain lessons for the coalfields of Central and Southern Appalachia.

can sustain families and communities, a future that, like the diamond, is bright and attractive.

Lessons for Appalachia

The economic transformation of Wilkes-Barre and the Wyoming Valley might well contain lessons for the coalfields of Central and Southern Appalachia, where the process of economic disintegration got a later start. Indeed, State University of New York-Binghamton historian Thomas Dublin, a student of economic decline in Pennsylvania's anthracite region, noted recently that deindustrialization in the anthracite coalfields "may hold lessons for the entire country."

Wilkes-Barre Times-Leader

The story of Wilkes-Barre and the Wyoming Valley tells us that such a transformation can be a slow process. It literally took over a decade to put a significant dent in the double-digit unemployment rate. It took partnerships between private interests and public entities to bring about the initial phase of solid manufacturing jobs which provided the economic means to sustain life in a for-profit economy. Some of these jobs remain today, despite the general movement toward a service sector economy. Furthermore, to bring about change, it took leadership at the local, state, and national levels that did not lose touch with grassroots concerns.

The growing dependency of the area during recent years on a service economy has had its downside. Low-wage jobs

with minimal or no benefits are a natural by-product. The longer term solutions may, indeed, not reside there. And there are, to be sure, longer term solutions still to be sought. According to Dublin, the region has never fully recovered from the demise of King Coal.

Finally, no matter how much the social and economic landscape is transformed as the anthracite region continues along its path to recovery, there is a human need to hold onto some semblance of the past.

The citizens of the Wyoming Valley are willing to drop that piece of coal and watch it fade into a diamond, but they don't want to completely forsake their own history in the quest for what lies ahead. The vision is for a future that does not disregard the struggles of those who came before but instead appreciates their determination to improve their

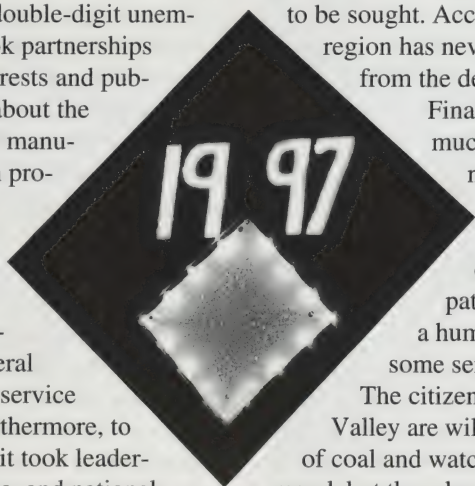
own and their families' fortunes.

Following the fireworks, the Public Square crowd disbanded. The bar and restaurant patrons made their way home, as did the city officials and event sponsors. Mayor McGroarty told a reporter, "It was a nice way to start the New Year."

The next morning—a cold, overcast day—the sons, daughters, and grandchildren of the area's forebears who elected to remain in the adopted homeland of their immigrant ancestors, awoke with optimism for the future and visions of a better life for themselves and those who follow.

Optimism is, after all, what guided their relatives across the vast Atlantic Ocean through the portals of Ellis Island and other entry points to this Appalachian community. **N&T**

Ken Wolensky is an anthracite region native and a student of its history, culture, and people. He holds a doctorate in adult education from Pennsylvania State University and is associate historian with the Pennsylvania Historical Commission in Harrisburg.



Concepts in a Dark Parlor

Some winter afternoons
when there was loud talk in the kitchen,
my old granny would lead me
into the parlor, her sincere relic
of gentler manners, worn and
polished memories.

She would lie back in her rocker,
hold my hand and tell me
of her love for a boy in blue
and how she, a maid of sixteen
when Gettysburg was fought,
waited in anguish for his letter
which never came.

And there in the musty light,
suffering leg cramp from a hard
pipe-organ stool, smelling
tired horsehair and Aunt May's
Belgian lace doilies,
I would try to join her dreams,
running to meet her in fields of daisies,
resting my bandaged head in her arms
under a torn battle flag.

—Richard Stephens

Nearing the end of a satisfying career as a teacher and social scientist, Richard Stephens has moved in a literary direction. He has had about 120 poems published in the last three years in small literary journals in the United States, Great Britain, and Canada.



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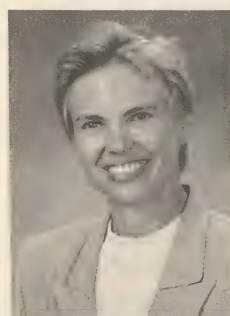
ARCHIVES MAKES TRANSITION FROM LIBRARY TO CENTER

In 1998, the **Archives of Appalachia** celebrates its twentieth anniversary as one of Appalachia's premier collections of regional materials. With that anniversary comes a change for the Archives.

For many years, administrative responsibility for the Archives was shared by the Center and by the University Library. Recommendations by a recent Task Force studying the Archives led to a decision to have the unit report solely to the Center and change its name officially from Archives and Special Collections to the Archives of Appalachia.

"This change will give the Archives of Appalachia new opportunities for growth and development and help the Archives more fully support the work of the Center as a whole," said Norma Myers, curator of the Archives.

In planning for the transition, staff of the Archives looks to improve its services to users, develop new collections and enhance preservation of existing collections, especially audio and video collections, and work in cooperation with other programs in the Center, such as the Reece Museum, to share expertise and resources. ♦



Susan Gott Seguret

BLUEGRASS FACULTY EXPANDED

The Bluegrass and Country Music Program at ETSU continues to grow with the recent appointment of **Susan**

Gott Seguret as a music faculty member and assistant director. Susan will assist program director Jack Tottle in teaching and administrative duties in the fast expanding program. She has toured nationally and taught bluegrass fiddle, vocals, and bluegrass history in Niederbronn, France before coming to ETSU. She is a native of Marshall, N. C.

"I consider my appointment at ETSU a two-way exchange and look forward to the inspiration which is bound to accompany this 'return to the source' of bluegrass music," Gott said.

continued on page 2

Hazel Scott Craft, Kingsport, Tenn., recently made a generous contribution of \$1,000 to the Archives of Appalachia. A strong supporter of the archives, Mrs. Craft donated a collection of personal papers documenting her life and literary career as a writer of short stories and poetry in 1991.

ARCHIVES BENEFITS FROM GENEROUS GIFT

"The Archives of Appalachia will benefit from Mrs. Craft's generous gift as it has benefited already from the gift of her personal papers," said Norma Myers, archives curator.

Craft's papers include correspondence and manuscripts of her writings. A native of Georgia, Mrs. Craft and her husband, Ralph, came to Kingsport in 1952, where they operated a restaurant for several years.

The Center and Archives extend a special "thank you" to Mrs. Craft. ♦

KENTON COE MUSICAL COMPOSITION COMMISSIONED BY CENTER AND MUSEUM

Most folks associate the Center with old-time or bluegrass music, but we support all kinds of music originating in the Appalachian region. The Center and the Friends of the Reece Museum jointly commissioned a new composition by Johnson City native **Kenton Coe**. Coe is an internationally known composer, who has created operas, musical plays, film scores, ballets, and orchestral works. The composition, for piano and voice, is titled "**A Family Gathering**" and is based on three poems by North Carolina poet Georgiana Orsini ("Tomato Sandwiches," "Silver," and "Family Likeness").

The work will be performed April 4, 1998, on the campus of East Tennessee State University by pianist **Lynn Rice-See** and vocalist **Sharon Mabry**. Coe will discuss the making of the composition at a reception that followed in the Reece Museum. Coe's composition will be included on a forthcoming compact disc, "New American Music: Art Songs and Solo Works for Piano by Tennessee Composers."

For information about the composition or the CD, contact Dr. Lynn Rice-See, Department of Music, ETSU, Johnson City, TN 37614 or (423) 439-5782. ♦

NewsCASS, the joint newsletter of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services (Archives of Appalachia, Reece Museum, and Regional Resources Institute) at East Tennessee State University, is published three times a year. Center and FORM members receive *NewsCASS* as part of the benefits of membership.

CENTER FOR APPALACHIAN STUDIES AND SERVICES

Dr. Jean Haskell Speer, Director

ARCHIVES OF APPALACHIA

Georgia Greer, Office Manager

Ned Irwin, University Archivist & Editor, *NewsCASS*

Norma Myers, Curator

Ed Speer, Archive Assistant

Marie Tedesco, Appalachian Archivist

REECE MUSEUM

Margaret S. Carr, Asst. Director/Registrar

Nancy Jane Earnest, Media Specialist

Lisa Erwin, Office Manager

Harold F. Stewart, Sr., Preparator

Blair H. White, Asst. Director/Curator

REGIONAL RESOURCES INSTITUTE

Nancy Fischman, Mng. Editor, *Now & Then*

Becky Grindstaff, Office Manager

Stevan Jackson, Director, Appalachian-
Scottish & Irish Studies

Charles Moore, Coordinator

Jack Tottle, Director, Bluegrass Program

Jane Harris Woodside, Asst. Director & Editor,
Now & Then

CENTER BIDS ADIEU TO STAFFER PENELOPE LANE

Penelope Lane, affectionately known to all as "Pene Lane," has left the Center staff after six years of exceptional service. She became a program officer for the Tennessee Humanities Council in Nashville in November. In her new job, Pene will oversee the grants program for all small towns in Tennessee and work with all aspects of the council's programming.

As a member of the Center staff, Pene served as Assistant Director of the Governor's School for Tennessee Heritage, played a significant role in the early stages of the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*, represented the Center at countless conferences and events, taught classes, and handled a host of other duties too numerous to mention. She has always been a passionate advocate for the work of the Center and for the Appalachian region.

We wish Penelope well in her new venture, while we learn to struggle with a "Pene-less" Center. ♦

Bluegrass, continued from page 1

The Bluegrass and Country Music program, the only program of its kind at a four-year university, is part of the Department of Music and is affiliated with the Center. ♦

NOTE: Photographs of Susan Gott Seguret, p. 1, and Jack Schrader, p. 7, courtesy of Larry Smith, University Relations.

On September 25, 1997, **Rudy Abramson** presented the kick-off lecture for a new series of public presentations on preserving our Appalachian heritage sponsored by the Center. The series will continue throughout the year with sessions one Tuesday per month at 11:30 a.m. in the Reece Museum galleries. Each session is designed to complement the exhibit program, but will also provide an emphasis on regional culture. Patrons will gain practical information concerning the care of personal



Photo by Blair White

Rudy Abramson speaks to museum audience

collections. Many individuals own collections similar to those housed in museums and archives; series presenters will offer practical guidelines for the care of such collections in the home.

The fall exhibit schedule includes "A Fresh Look at

YEAR-LONG APPALACHIAN HERITAGE SERIES BEGINS

Appalachia" photo winners from *Now and Then: The Appalachian Magazine* and the annual alumni exhibition which features photographs by ETSU photographer Larry Smith and paintings by Johnson City artist Bill Nickels. Ed Speer and Ned Irwin of the Archives of Appalachia presented **Preserving Our Heritage through Genealogy** on October 21, and Marie Tedesco, also of the archives, discussed **Care of Family Photographs** on November 11. As a holiday topic, Tess Lloyd presented **Collecting Family Folklore** on December 9.

The series continues into 1998 with **Yard Art and Outdoor Sculpture** on January 13, **Appreciating Ethnic Traditions in Appalachia** on February 10, **Preserving Family and Community Heirlooms** on March 10, and **The Heritage of Healing** on April 14, 1998. We have determined topics for the series through December 1998; they include **Collecting and Caring for Regional Art, Collecting and Caring for Regional Crafts, Preserving and Pickling: Foodways in Appalachia, Documenting Community Culture through Oral History, The Heritage of Textiles through Technology, Holiday**

continued on page 7

NEW APPALACHIAN STUDIES STUDENT GROUP FORMED

A new student group has recently organized on the ETSU campus to focus on Appalachian studies. **Mountain Glory** is the group name. Tenika Dye, an ETSU freshman from Rhea County, won a \$50 prize for the winning suggestion.

Members of Mountain Glory are already demonstrating their enthusiasm for the group; several helped with the oral history project at the recent National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough (see article on page 6). In addition, the group has formed a steering committee to draft a constitution. For more information on the organization, call **Tess Lloyd** at 439-5996 or **Stevan Jackson** at 439-8465. Mountain Glory is open to all ETSU students as well as members of the local community. ♦

PROGRESS NOTED ON ENCYCLOPEDIA PROJECT

Work on the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* continues to be a top priority for the Center. After the successful meeting of the advisory and editorial boards in Washington last March (reported in the last issue of *NewsCASS*), Center staff and board members went to work on the strategies planned in the meeting.

According to Center director and *Encyclopedia* co-editor Jean Speer, "advisory board members took active leadership in helping us raise \$50,000 to match a challenge grant offered by the Appalachian Regional Com-

mission, and editorial board members reviewed topic outlines and helped us identify potential writers and section editors. Center staff worked on drafting the introduction to the volume and setting up a system of information management for the massive volume of material we're receiving."

During the summer of 1997, **Doug Powell**, a former student at East Tennessee State University and now a doctoral student at Miami University of Ohio, assisted with the *Encyclopedia* work, entering contributors and their subjects into a database, reviewing topic lists, and helping edit introductory material.

The University of Tennessee Press, the publisher of the

continued on page 11

COLLOQUIUM PROGRAMS STUDY APPALACHIAN ISSUES

The **Appalachian Colloquium** has a new lease on life.

The Center has revived a popular series that first ran during the 1993-1994 academic year. Dedicated to discussing diverse regional issues, the colloquia are open to faculty, staff, students, and community members and are held twice a semester on ETSU's campus.

"There is certainly no shortage of regional issues to discuss," says Colloquium coordinator Jane Woodside. "We feel that it's important for the Center to provide a chance for a kind of cross-fertilization between people in the university and folks in the surrounding community on a whole range of topics."

Early during the spring semester, a Colloquium session will feature the resources of the **Archives of Appalachia**, celebrating its 20th anniversary in 1998, while later on, "What I Plan to Do Over My Summer Vacation" will give faculty members at ETSU and other colleges a chance to share their plans for summer research on regional topics and possibly discover opportunities for collaboration.

Two meetings were held during the fall semester. The first session, "Appalachia Goes to College: How Regional Culture Affects ETSU Students and the Faculty Members Who Teach Them," involved students, faculty members, administrators, and community members in a lively and probing discussion about how regional culture affects the educational process. *Point Man for God* allowed participants first to view and then to discuss a video documentary on the work of **Bernard Coffendaffer**, the West Virginia businessman who has engaged in a personal crusade to plant trios of white and gold crosses throughout the region. The documentary was directed by WBNP-TV of Morgantown, W. Va.'s **Jacob Young**, best known for having chronicled the life and career of dancer and Elvis impersonator Jesco White in *Dancing Outlaw* and *Jesco Goes to Hollywood*.

Various members of the Appalachian Studies Minor

continued on page 11

ARCHIVES

SELECTED RECENT ACQUISITIONS

APPALACHIAN-SCOTTISH & IRISH STUDIES COLLECTION

1997. 1 ft. and 22 audiotapes. Addition.

Consists of photographs and audio recordings documenting the 1997 summer study trip of the program to Scotland. Lectures and field trips examine Scottish history and culture, music, Highland development, and the Gaelic language. Donated by program director Stevan Jackson, ETSU.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RECORDS

1948-81. .5 ft.

Consists of a report on teacher education accreditation, a plaque, and blueprints and drawings related to the construction and addition work of Warf-Pickel Hall (education building). Donated by Rebecca Osborne on behalf of the dean's office.

EMMETT ESSIN PAPERS

1996-97. 1 ft.

Papers of this ETSU professor of history consists of manuscript drafts and galley sheets for Essin's book *Shavetails and Bell Sharps: the History of the U. S. Army Mule*.

Donated by Dr. Emmett Essin.

RUTH BEARD FARRIS PAPERS

1997. 2 items.

Consists of newsclippings, photographs, and one videotape documenting Farris' family history, family home, and her grandmother's quilts. Donated by Elizabeth Hulcher.

OLD JONESBOROUGH CEMETERY INVENTORY COLLECTION

1995-96. 3 ft.

A project of the Governor's School for Tennessee Heritage, the inventory contains individual data sheets and a plan of the cemetery layout recording tombstone inscriptions on graves in the oldest cemetery in Tennessee's oldest town. Donated by instructor Joe Spence, Knoxville, Tenn.

SOUTHSIDE PTA RECORDS

1928-58. 3 ft.

Consists of minutes, clippings, correspondence, programs documenting the activities of Johnson City's Southside Elementary School Parent-Teachers Association. Donated by Kathleen Thomas, Johnson City, Tenn.

The archives thanks the following for other donations of materials to the department recently: Charles S. Baldwin, Katie Doman, Ethel Garrity, Charles Gunter, Jr., John Kiener, Carolyn Moore, Charles Moore, Robert T. Nave, and Joe Spence. ♦



Photo courtesy University Archives

"Lady of Cooper" stained glass window

MUSEUM BARBECUE PROVES A SUCCESS

September 13, 1997 was a memorable day in the history of the Friends of the Reece Museum (FORM). We held our first membership rally complete with barbecue and bluegrass. Thanks to the ETSU Bluegrass Band, Stevan Jackson, Martha Culp, and Bernard and Audrey Kaiman for performing. We extend our thanks to Citizens Bank for its sponsorship of the event, and to Coca-Cola of Johnson City, and Food City #601 for contributing refreshments. We also appreciate The Firehouse Restaurant, Mize Farm and Garden Supply, and Evergreen of Johnson City for their assistance.

Thanks also to the tireless efforts of the FORM Membership and Development Committee. Committee members baked desserts, created "straw people," decorated the barbecue area, and served as hosts for the event. We were fortunate to have the assistance of four President's Pride students. Our thanks also go to our own Reece Museum student workers. The event was a success -- thanks to all our FRIENDS.

Throughout the membership drive, we added numerous new members. FORM funding makes possible nearly all the public receptions, much of the printing, and sponsorship of special events. FORM has also worked diligently

continued on page 7

REECE MUSEUM

PLANS MADE FOR "WAKE" OF "LADY"

Friends of the Reece Museum (FORM) has a few superstitions for you to explore at their next fund-raising event on Friday, March 13, 1998. Friday the 13th -- a great day to find out the **real** story behind the "Lady of Cooper," a large leaded glass window featuring a beautiful young woman teetering on the edge of a cliff.

The window was originally situated in the home of **George L. Carter**, one of this region's wealthiest industrialists and philanthropists. Carter broke ground for his home on Southwest Avenue (just west of what is now University Parkway) in October 1908 and completed it in 1909. The Spanish tile roof, cherry and oak woodwork, mantels, inlaid floors, stained glass windows, circular showers, and intricate light fixtures were just a few of the interior splendors. Until 1916, it was the Carter home and later served as the residence of the general manager of Carter's Model Mill.

In 1944 Carter's wife and son sold the property to East Tennessee State College. In a letter from former ETSU President Charles Sherrod to Governor Prentice Cooper, the president thanked him for his support. "It (the house) will be a monument for your thoughtful foresight." The building was named Cooper Hall. Fully remodeled, the building opened in September, 1946, as a residence hall for senior women. Dean of Women Ella Ross served as head resident of the facility which had very high entrance standards. The requirements for living in Cooper Hall were to maintain a "B" average and never to have been charged with disciplinary action, i.e., placed on any kind of social probation. Hence, the young women were often referred to as **Ella's Angels**.

After its days as a women's dormitory came to a close, the building became home to a variety of campus services; its name was changed to Cooper Annex after a men's dormitory, constructed near the house, was named Cooper Hall. Cooper Annex housed classrooms and offices for the pre-school for the deaf, later became the studio for a campus radio station, then was left unoccupied when the radio station moved to new quarters.

Only one of two things usually happens to old houses which are past their prime--they are either torn down or renovated and, hopefully, restored to their original states. In 1984, Cooper Annex found itself in just such a plight. Through the years, the building had had particular additions and "improvements" made for various purposes, but it had lapsed into a state of disrepair. A university planning committee was appointed to conduct a study concerning the most feasible plan of action for the building. Although several options for saving the house were proposed, plans were soon made to raze the building. It became clear that the fate of one of the area's most historic residences had been

continued on page 8

NON-TELLERS TELL: CENTER PARTICIPATES IN HISTORY PROJECT ON STORYTELLING

The 1997 **National Storytelling Association** (NSA) joined with the Center to collect a weekend's worth of oral history from visitors to the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tenn., October 3-5, in honor of the Festival's 25th anniversary. Center staff and students from the newly organized Appalachian student group "Mountain Glory," collected 45 sessions of personal history, remembrance, and congratulatory messages from veteran festival-goers. The tapes become part of the NSA collection and copies will be stored in the **Archives of Appalachia** at ETSU.

The interviewees (they call themselves "listeners") told how they had been married at Storytelling, or arrived by accident when the camper broke down, have taken the potential of story to their classrooms and their lives, discovered that telling is not "southern" nor "American" alone, or have focused on the annual event as their yearly vacation trip. Many were from outside the region of East Tennessee and enjoy their visit to **Jonesborough** which was described

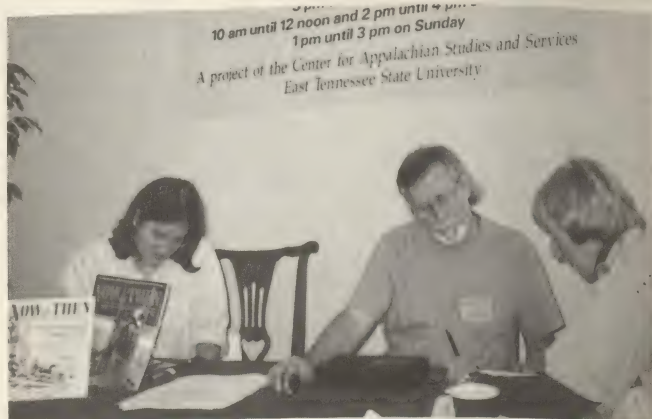


Photo by Roberta Herrin

Megan Gregory, left, ETSU music major, and Stevan Jackson, of CASS, center, conduct interview.

as the "stage" for the festival. Several of the listeners who have attended 22 or more years of storytelling commented on the growth of this event and the growth of story and storytelling across the United States.

One couple related how they had come to the festival still planning their wedding, stuffed invitations at the hotel, pleaded with the Jonesborough postmistress to hand cancel specifically with a Jonesborough address only to find that some invitations never arrived, or arrived late, sometimes at the same address! But, all's well that ends well. ♦

Friends of the Reece Museum (FORM)

supports the mission of the Reece Museum through monetary contributions as well as through the volunteer services of its members. FORM funds acquisitions for museum collections, improvements to facilities, public receptions and lectures, and art scholarships. FORM volunteers assist in museum education programs.

FORM members receive Museum and CASS publications, a membership card, discounts on FORM-sponsored events, and advance notice of FORM-sponsored lectures and public forums.

☐ FORM Student	\$5
☐ FORM Individual	\$15
☐ FORM Family	\$25
☐ FORM Supporting	\$50
☐ FORM Patron	\$100
☐ FORM Sustaining	\$250
☐ FORM Benefactor	\$500 or more

(including private benefactors, business, and industrial patrons)

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Please make checks payable to FORM and mail to Reece Museum, ETSU Box 70660, Johnson City TN 37614-0660.

"SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES" THEME SET FOR CONFERENCE

The 1998 Appalachian Studies Association (ASA) conference will be held March 20-22 at the Broyhill Hill Inn and Conference Center, Appalachian State University, Boone, N.C. The ASA is composed of scholars, students, and interested citizens from throughout the region.

The theme for this year will be "Building Sustainable Mountain Communities: Tradition and Change." The guest speaker on Friday evening will be novelist Lee Smith, author of *Fancy Strut, Fair and Tender Ladies, Amazing Grace*, and other best sellers. Smith is also a member of the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* Advisory Board.

The conference features several speakers in each of 60 sessions on historical and contemporary perspectives about Appalachia drawn from the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. There will be a plenary session addressing sustainability in the mountains. On Friday morning, there will be tours of the Appalachian Cultural Museum, a tour of a sustainable community in a rural area where the Sustainable Development Program from ASU has been involved and a tour of sustainable agriculture as practiced on several area farms. Book signings, featuring the latest in Appalachian Studies publications, and booksellers from many major university presses in the Appalachian field are present throughout the weekend. Attendance comes not just from Appalachia but from across the nation.

The 1998 ASA meeting will include the quarterly meeting of

continued on page 7



The photograph to the left of musician Herlin Riley is from a series of photographs by Gediyon Kifle shown at the Reece Museum in an exhibit celebrating "Black History Month." The exhibit is on display from January 8-March 1, 1998.

REECE MUSEUM

EXHIBIT EXAMINES SCHRADER'S ARTISTIC VISION AND VIRTUOSITY

Jack Schrader came to the ETSU Department of Art in 1962 as an instructor. He began teaching photography in 1964 and expanded the photography department. Schrader served as chair of the department from 1979 until his death in November 1993. He steered the department through its initial National Association of Schools of Art and Design accreditation in 1983.

Schrader earned his B.A. from Lawrence College, Appleton, Wis., and the M.F.A. from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan. He exhibited his work widely, focusing on photographic exhibits. Schrader's early work primarily consisted of sculpture, oil portraits, and drawings/sketches. He was an instructor at Auburn

University for a short time, and moved to Beaumont, Tex., in 1959 as an instructor at Lamar University. During this time he worked in oils and watercolors.

After the move to Johnson City in 1962, Schrader seemed to abandon painting and graphics for photography. He produced work in black and white and in color, and experimented with various processes. He produced five short films on Tennessee craftsmen, and co-produced with Dr. Thomas Burton, "They Shall Take Up Serpents" in 1973, "Ray Hicks of Beech Mountain" in 1974, and "Neighborhood Capitalism: The Food Co-op" in



Jack Schrader

1974. Schrader produced a small amount of sculpture during this time, as well. In 1985, he revisited oil painting and produced several abstract oils on canvas and masonite. He continued to produce sculpture; several large welded sculptures, which are part of the Museum collection, were done in 1993.

The Reece Museum has collected more than 55 pieces of work by Schrader which represent examples of virtually every medium in which he worked. We are also fortunate to have works on loan from family members and friends in the community. The Schrader exhibit is an effort to share with the community a small portion of Jack's vision. ♦

Conference, continued from page 6

the Appalachian Consortium. The consortium recently conducted a two-day meeting Linear Parks Conference at Lake Junaluska, N.C., which featured 30 speakers presenting papers on the future of linear parks in the United States, cultural heritage preservation, and the problems and triumphs of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Featured speakers were Jimmy Johnson, a long-time business leader in Cherokee, N. C., who spoke of the impending opening of the tribal casino and its effect on the people of Cherokee, and Rudy Abramson, co-editor of the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*, from Reston, Va., who pointed out that heritage preservation is seldom won by the defeat of Disneyfication but is stolen silently by encroaching development. ♦

Barbecue, continued from page 5

to raise monies to establish the FORM Scholarship Endowment. Other projects currently being undertaken by FORM include the refinishing of the Steinway piano, and the restoration of the stained glass window from the Cooper Annex. ♦

Heritage, continued from page 3

Traditions in Appalachia, and Gifts of Heritage (for high schoolers 13+).

All sessions are free and open to the public. There should be adequate parking available close to the museum building during the lunch hour, and guests are welcome to bring a brown bag lunch. ♦

CENTER AIDS IN COMPARATIVE STUDY BY JAPANESE SCHOLAR

Regional studies, such as those conducted by the Center, operate within a larger sphere of comparative-regional studies from around the world. Over the years, the Center has maintained contact with Italian-regional studies in Rome, mountain-studies in Romania, and of course, Scottish studies with the University of Edinburgh, as well as a variety of American regional studies.

One area gaining attention in the Center is comparative-regional studies between Japan and Appalachia. The center is currently helping to publish a manuscript by well-respected Japanese author **Ue Toshikatsu** titled *Living in the Mountains of Japan: Essays by Ue Toshikatsu*. These essays are written by a "man of the



Photo courtesy Ue Toshikatsu

Ue Toshikatsu

mountains" from the Kii Peninsula of Japan, a remote region in the middle of the world's most densely populated island-country. Ue-san has published seven books and has been the subject of broadcasts

by NHK (the PBS equivalent in Japan).

Tennesseans, and Tennessee-Appalachians, have had a mixed relationship with Japan for several years. The Nissan plant at Smyrna, Tenn., and the Tennessee Meiji Gakuin High School at Sweetwater, Tenn., have sparked interest in the region about a country that has been vilified more than loved by Americans. In our immediate Tri-Cities region, we are reminded that in 1941 a local woman married and moved with her Japanese husband back to Japan just after the beginning of World War Two. Her name was Gwen Terisaki, and she wrote about her life in *A Bridge to the Sun*. Also, the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga has organized a Japan Studies department for providing local high school teachers in the region with useful (and correct) information about the Japanese.

Living in the Mountains of Japan, is a collection of 30 essays by Ue-san about his family, career, mountain work, river life, and forest life far from the bright lights and big cities of Japan. The essays are drawn from four larger publications and covers his life during the devastation of the forests, their eventual uni-crop replacement, the effect of

continued on page 11

"Wake," continued from page 5

sealed, much to the dismay of the local public. Later that year, the building was leveled, and with it, some of the hopes and history of those who used and loved the "Grand Old Lady."

A rock thrown into the house had broken a small area in the corner of the window, and prior to the 1984 demise of Cooper Annex, the window was removed and placed in storage. It remained in storage until 1996 when it was relocated to the Reece Museum. The years had taken their toll on the once beautiful window. Renovation will include replacement of all broken glass, repair/replacement of lead, restoration of the reverse painting, and replacement of support bars. The window must be disassembled and reconstructed in order to perform the extensive repairs.

Funds raised at this truly unique FORM event will make possible the "resurrection" of the "Lady of Cooper" who will then grace the interior of the Reece as a permanent fixture. Mark your calendars for the 1998 FORM fund-raiser -- Friday, March 13. The evening will offer many surprises; maybe even some that aren't planned. On a date like this, who knows? ♦

POETRY CONTEST SET

Now & Then, the Appalachian Magazine, announces the **1998 Appalachian Poetry Contest**. Distinguished poet Fred Chappell will serve as final judge.

The contest is open to all poets, published and unpublished. However, entries must be original, may not have been previously published, and must pertain in some way to the Appalachian region, which stretches from southern New York state to northern Mississippi. The poem will be considered "Appalachian" if the poet is originally from the region, if the poet is currently living in the region, or if the content of the poem relates to life in the region, past or present.

In addition to cash prizes, winners will have their work featured in the summer 1998 Appalachian Poetry issue of *Now & Then*. All entries must be postmarked no later than **March 2, 1998**.

To obtain complete guidelines, e-mail *Now & Then* at woodsidj@etsu-tn.edu, write **Now & Then Poetry Contest**, CASS/ETSU, Box 70556, Johnson City TN 37614-0556, or call 423-439-5348. ♦

Memberships in the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services

MEMBERSHIPS GIVE YOU NOW & THEN AND MUCH MORE

Membership in the Center provides public recognition of your generosity and your support for our work in the Appalachian region. No matter what size the investment, a contribution to the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services through membership brings important returns. Your benefits of membership are:

- Members receive three issues of the Center's magazine, **Now & Then**, to keep you abreast of Appalachian issues and the best in Appalachian writing and photography.
- Members receive the Center's newsletter, **NewsCASS**, three times a year. Members are publicly acknowledged in the newsletter once each year.

- Members receive special member rates and discounts on books, recordings, and other publications or productions, study tours, study abroad, conferences, and programs.

In addition, your membership provides the Center with these benefits:

- Memberships help us conduct the Center's multiple programs and projects in teaching, research, and service in the Appalachian region.
- Members have opportunities for participating in Center projects as volunteers.

Center Membership/Now & Then

- | | | |
|--|--------------|---------|
| ☐ CASS Student Associates | \$10 | |
| (for undergraduate and graduate students) | | |
| ☐ CASS Friends | \$15 | |
| ☐ CASS Institutional Affiliate | \$20 | |
| (libraries, etc.) ☐ Payment enclosed ☐ Please bill | | |
| ☐ CASS Contributors | \$25 | |
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| ☐ CASS Patrons | \$250 | or more |
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Donations in excess of \$15 may be tax deductible.

Friends of the Center are also encouraged to support specific programs with special funds already established for them.

YES! I'd like to make an additional contribution of \$_____ to:

- ☐ Appalachian Studies Curriculum
- ☐ Appalachian-Scottish & Irish Studies Program
- ☐ Country and Bluegrass Music Program

Other ways to contribute to the Center:

Scholarships • Fellowships • Memorials & Honor Gifts • Gift Memberships • In-kind and Special Gifts • Employee Matching Gifts • Bequests by Will • Retirement Plans and IRAs • Gifts of Stocks • Gifts of Archival Value, Art, Historical Artifacts

Thank you for your support. Make checks payable to ETSU/CASS and send to CASS, ETSU Box 70556, Johnson City TN 37614-0556.

Please fill out the information below:

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Center: 423-439-5348 FAX: 423-439-6340
Archives: 423-439-4338 Box 70295
Reece Museum: 423-439-4392 Box 70660

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Archives and Special Collections

Members are invited to make donations of materials having historical and cultural significance for Southern Appalachia and its people, as well as financial contributions to the Archives of Appalachia Fund and to the Tom Daniels Memorial Fund (for archives media projects). For further information, phone (423) 439-4338 or write Archives of Appalachia, at the address below.

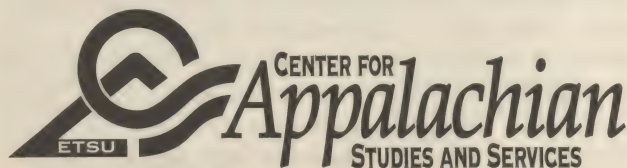
- ☐ Archives of Appalachia Fund Amount _____
☐ Tom Daniels Memorial Fund Amount _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Please make checks payable to the specific fund named and mail to Archives of Appalachia, ETSU Box 70295, Johnson City TN 37614-0295.



Center for Appalachian Studies and Services
East Tennessee State University
Box 70556
Johnson City TN 37614-0556

Forward and Address Correction Requested

THE ART THING:

New Partners in Old Coalfields

by T. Allan Comp

Unlikely partners create a new approach to engaging communities in addressing the most widespread environmental problem in the Appalachian coal region.

The brilliant color of many streams and the absence of life within their banks attest to the largest and most widespread environmental problem in the Appalachian coalfields: the devastation wrought by acid mine drainage or AMD. Dead streams flow through communities once dedicated to the production of coal, where backbreaking work and momentous achievements instilled a deep sense of pride — but left behind a scarred and rusting landscape.

Growing up in an area of orange streams, dead waters, and black hills of coal mine refuse left many with a sense that their own personal history was stained, marked by an immutable condition that will neither dissolve nor disappear. Residents in the coal towns of Southwestern Pennsylvania recall thinking as children that the many streams that flowed in their hometowns were filled with orange juice, only to learn that their own grandfathers had worked the mines that created and killed the orange juice streams of their youth.

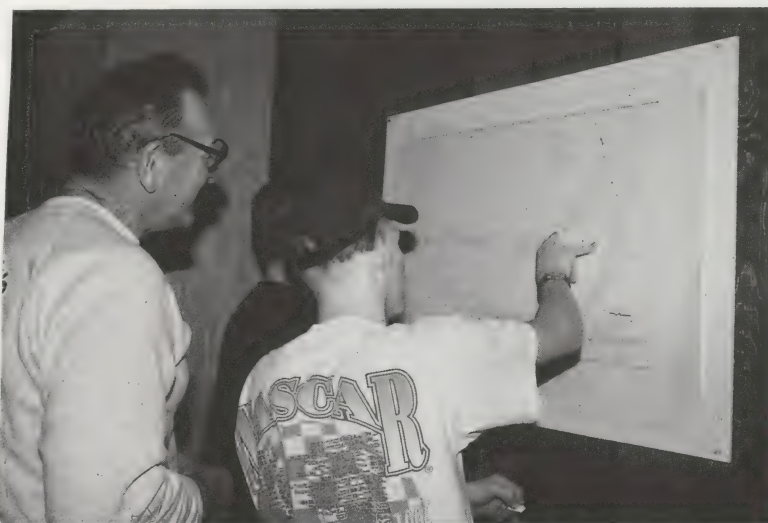
A Mental Shift

Today, there is a new approach developing in Southwestern Pennsylvania's coal region, an approach that asks new questions and finds new answers. What if AMD were understood not as a permanent problem, but as a work left for us to finish? What if fixing AMD were viewed not as something to be done by the government off in some hidden place, but by the community in a public place that celebrates our mining history? What would

this mental shift, this transformation in perception mean in communities across a region now struggling with environmental devastation and economic decline? What if this AMD crisis were seen as a new opportunity: to create an economic — even a spiritual — asset, a chance for transformation?

The transformation is already underway. AMD&ART, a project I am directing, is a joint venture of two organizations based in the historic coal region of Southwestern Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Rural Arts Alliance, based in Loretto, Pa., is a multicounty arts programming and advocacy arm of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, while the Allegheny Heritage Corporation of Hollidaysburg, Pa., is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to creating sustainable, resource-based tourism destination in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Working under their umbrella, a small team of historians, scientists, and designer/artists is at work in Vintondale and Jamestown/Portage in Cambria County as well as in several communities along Dark Shade Creek in Somerset County, just to the south. Together, the team is working with each community to develop an



Courtesy of the AMD&ART Project

One of the most important factors in the success of the AMD&ART Project is community participation in the design of its park. Here, residents of Vintondale, Pa., gather to help design a preliminary rendition of the environmental art park at a town meeting.

environmental history/art park that cleans up AMD. This new kind of “place-making” will occur first in a 40-acre site nestled between the village of Vintondale and the popular Ghost Town Rail Trail and is scheduled for completion in 1998. The other two sites are under development in a sequential process that could see all three completed within four years.

Heavy Industry and Hard Work

For a historian, this AMD problem has many different facets. In a region of heavy industry and hard work, there is still great pride in the historical accomplishments of the region — massive steel mills, vast coal mines, miles of modern railroad, and the influx of immigrants from across the planet at work. This sense of pride exists concurrently with an equally strong sense of shame in the failure of that world and those who worked in it, the vast post-World War II economic free fall of the region from heavy industry to unemployment, underemployment, early retirement, and the out-migration of working youth. Often still caught

in a company town mind-set that waits for “The Company” (often now “The Government”) to point the direction or take the lead, residents in the region can be history-proud, history-shamed, anxious about their future, yet incredibly passive.

It is this understanding of the past that creates the base for successful community action. From a historical perspective, AMD is the result, not of purposeful evil, but of earnest individual efforts to make a living, create a better life, and help build a nation, a quest that unknowingly produced a problem for succeeding generations. Defining this problem as “unfinished work,” left to this generation to complete, creates a personal challenge, especially in a region where family ties, the traditional work ethic, and a compulsion to complete a job once started runs so deep. Bringing the perspectives of history to mix with the discipline of good science, the healing accessibility and delight of art, and the energy of community engagement creates a productive pathway for action, a pathway that can lead to a way out of a problem that challenges the peoples of the entire Appalachian coal re-

gion. Equally important, at each specific site, the new “place” created to treat both AMD and history in artful ways will take a location once energized by the activity of hundreds of miners and re-energize it with the activity of residents, visitors, hikers, and bikers — and with the ghosts of a past place that has now been transformed into an economic asset, a pride-full and creative park-place.

Sitting Lightly Upon the Land

For the scientist, ready access to mineable coal has resulted in a long history of coal extraction — and an equally long history of AMD production. AMD discharges are formed when groundwater is captured by the extensive mine workings created by both surface and underground mining methods. Iron sulfide minerals or “Fool’s Gold” within the coal and its associated strata are exposed during the mining process and react with the water captured by the mine. The result is an unstable, aqueous, often acidic solution that has high metal concentrations, usually iron, manganese, and aluminum. When this solution is exposed to air, the dissolved metals start to oxidize and drop out, coating streams with orange iron oxide that kills the bottom of the food chain and, thus, the entire stream.

Changes in mining law now require that mining operations implement AMD prevention and reduction strategies as integral elements of their mining plans. While these innovations hold promise for the future, we must still deal with the vast inventory of abandoned and untreated mine discharges that have severely impacted the aquatic habitat in our region.

Over the past 15 years, a natural way of treating AMD has evolved. After noticing that native wetlands were effectively removing the metals from AMD, several groups of scientists in West Virginia, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere in the Appalachian coal belt began experimenting with man-made wetlands as a treatment alternative. Others added new elements, such as the use of limestone and organic material used in particular sequences, and what had once been called wetland treatment gave way to a more general term: “passive treatment.”

From the purely scientific standpoint, AMD&ART will allow us to construct



Roberta M. Moore

Team designer / artist Julie Bargman playfully tests the orange sediment of AMD as remediation for new white shoes.

and monitor passive treatment systems on very large discharges, several releasing over 2,000 gallons per minute. This will be a giant step forward in researching how to make these large-scale systems viable.

Moreover, the AMD&ART concepts of unfinished work, landscape evolution, and engaging the community add special meaning to this project. Instead of just constructing a system for treating water, the site itself must put the reason for treatment in its historical context and give it visual expression. Instead of forcing a rigidly pre-engineered treatment plant on the site, the system must “sit lightly upon the land” and accentuate the current and future landscapes. The design will require good science, good history, and good art, which at this level are approximately the same thing. Rather than compromise any discipline, we must accommodate all disciplines while working within the context of community expectations and aspirations — and budget realities.

Sunday Morning, 2007

For the designer/artist, the challenge is to give physical expression to the history and science and community hopes energizing this project. With different sets of eyes and ears pressed close to the community, the design for each site springs from the interaction and interactive needs of history, science, the community, and art. When describing this collaborative process, artists tend to look toward the future, toward what each site will be when completed. What they see as a result of the AMD&ART team collaboration is something like this:

It's Saturday afternoon, 1997. The coal is gone, used to build the country's industry and wealth. Yet the poisonous remnants of the work remain. It is as if the land were turned inside out. Miles of empty underground tunnels fill with acidic water. On the surface, black bony piles create macabre mountain ranges. It will take an industrial-strength, bio-logical system to cleanse the water that bursts up from the depths. It will take acres of engineered ponds and constructed wetlands to create a productive landscape — a new community asset that exists as part of the region, as part of the town, as a pride-full part of residents' lives.

It's Sunday morning, 2007. A retired coal miner is walking with his grandson

along Vintondale's Ghost Town Rail Trail, adjacent to our first AMD&ART site. Stepping onto a wooden boardwalk, they move across pools of water. A chain of these pools looks like beads on a string, the cleansing necklace changing from orange to green and then a reflective blue as the water finally flows toward the Blacklick Creek. At each dike, water spills over a huge slab of limestone inscribed with words that the grandfather recognizes. As his eyes follow a trace of orange deposits, called “yellow boy” by the miners, back to a dark recess in the mountain, he tells the child another story about working in the old No. 6 mine, now the source of the AMD.

The old man and child wind their way through the grassy wetland. The bent stalks chart the ever changing direction of the wind. Silently, this wetland is soaking up the metal and acidity, filtering the water through the incredible complexity of a successful wetland. Stands of red maples map the twists and turns of the subterranean mines. The slabs of limestone mark

the changes in the pH level of the acid water as it moves from pond to pond. The revived water leaves behind the orange stain that gathers in the inscribed text that gives information about the site at each of these limestone spillways.

Wandering over another dike, the grandfather and child stoop over to decipher red numbers on a nearby device. They flash: “pH 6.1, pH 6.1” over and over again, the reading for clean water that will support aquatic life. Together, they follow the clear stream of water and watch it splash down into the Blacklick. Later, they might go fishing.

Where To Now?

Southwestern Pennsylvania is a region of remarkable beauty and stark degradation where residents and visitors alike often miss the attractions of the region by focusing exclusively on its problems. When I first started as director of this project, I called it the “Art Thing,” purposefully refusing to define it, searching to find a way to undermine those negative



Robert M. Moore

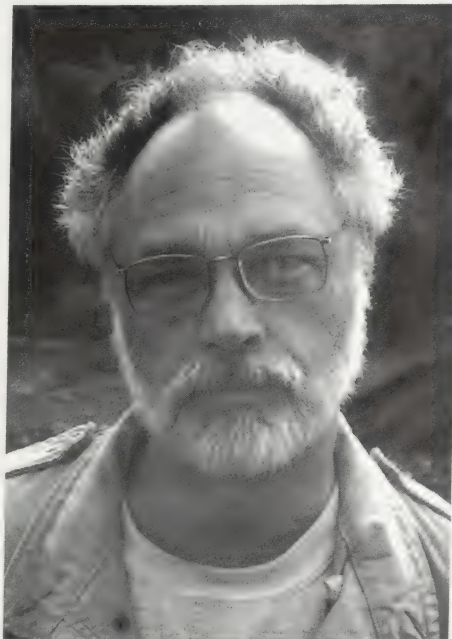
Designer/artist Julie Bargman provides a sense of scale to the bony pile that forms the backdrop to the Vintondale site.

expectations brought by residents and visitors to the area, to undermine them with large-scale public landscape art that actually solves environmental problems.

What I've found is a team of remarkable talents, a region seemingly passive but deeply anxious to engage in productive new approaches, and a chance to bring my own work in history, public art, the environment, and community development to bear on a single problem. The process of solving that problem promised great opportunity. As a team, we have learned that by taking science, history, art, and community interests with equal seriousness, we create great strength and open the way for truly innovative collaboration that brings deep connection with each place where we work.

Vintondale is our first demonstration project, a relatively small discharge of about 200 gallons a minute. Our second site, the Hughes Bore Hole near Jamestown/Portage, is the site where 2,000 gallons per minute are discharged, killing miles of stream. Success here will literally heal the waters that long ago dissolved the bones of scores of men killed in a mine explosion. The last project will

address the nine miles of Dark Shade Creek, which flows through Somerset County's Central City and several other small coal camps. Along Dark Shade Creek, there are three 2,000 gallon per minute AMD discharges and more than a dozen smaller ones. Here, we will com-



Robert M. Moore

Project director T. Allan Comp.

bine what we learn in the first two sites to address the problems of an entire watershed, a first tiny step toward tackling the Appalachian coal region as a whole.

It's been a humbling lesson in the power of history, the tenacity and resilience of residents long-battered by decline and devastation, and the great fun that truly collaborative community projects can bring to all concerned. Now we are ready to build. **NaT**

T. Allan Comp, a historian of American technology, is AMD&ART's award-winning project director. He also serves as director for training and special projects for the Allegheny Heritage Development Corporation, Hollidaysburg, Pa.

The author thanks scientist Bob Deason and designer/artists Julie Bargman & Stacey Levy for their help with this article.

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Good-bye, Mother

You open your mind at the front door
and she's up to her eyes in weeds,

hands like branches on the sky,
waving rage for you to come.

You shake your head
(it would topple if you nodded)

and start to close the door.
She rives the wind,

stifles grackles and daws,
gesturing.

But the day is grey-cold.

She always told you to keep your head warm.

You just stoke the stove,
it's blushing wine.

The cat paws her way to womb-warmth.
Your wife tells you to shut the door.

You pick up this evening's wet newspaper,
wave to her waving, slam your mind.

The weeds pull her down,
make seeds of her eyes.

—Chris Wood

West Virginia resident Chris Wood's poetry has appeared in Poet and Bohemian Bridge.

MURALS

by Michael Maloney

Back in 1993, one of Appalachian Ohio's native sons headed to California to do a summer internship—and the seed was planted for what has become Rural Action's Arts Heritage program, a series of mural projects in Southern Ohio.

Twenty-two-year-old art student Geoff Schenkel was between his junior and senior years at Marietta College, a small liberal arts college located in Marietta, Ohio. Working under professional muralist Susan Cervantes, Schenkel found himself in charge of the Precita Eyes Murals Project in San Francisco.

This project was run by Cervantes for the Sixth Street Corridor, a low-income neighborhood with a sizable homeless population. "The organizer was a man in his mid-30s named Rudy who lived in a Pinto," says Schenkel. "He was streetwise and looked after me.

"The ideas for the mural came from the people of the community. Once the design was complete, each participant was given a paint brush," Schenkel continues. What resulted was "Your Eyes Embrace My World," a mural based on the lives of the Sixth Street Corridor homeless. "What impressed me," Schenkel says, "was that the day before I went home, I made one last visit to the mural. A guy, a complete stranger but a resident of the community, pinned me to the wall and said demandingly, 'It's pretty cool, don't you think?'"

"That kind of outcome is pretty powerful. Since then, I've seen it take place in the towns here in Southern Ohio."

Showing the Folks Back Home

Eventually, Schenkel transplanted a Precita Eyes-style mural project back home to Harmar, a section of Marietta. Schenkel found a ready sponsor in his former art teacher Carol Garoza, a 45-

A young Ohio painter practices art therapy on a grand scale.

year old New York state native who has taught in the Marietta school system for about 15 years. From December 1993 to May 1996, Garoza and Schenkel worked with the Harmar community and its school children to develop four murals on a sewage pump station at the confluence of the Ohio and Muskingum Rivers.

In spite of having historic homes dating back to pioneers days, Harmar was once considered by Mariettans as a rough neighborhood. Still largely working class, the neighborhood has since become respectable.

Following graduation in 1994, Schenkel became a VISTA volunteer for Rural Action, a multicounty community development corporation based in Athens and Trimble, Ohio. In time, Rural Action

officially adopted and eventually expanded the mural project. Now murals are in some state of development more than 50 miles to the west of Harmar in Perry County's Shawnee, Athens County's Glouster, and Vinton County's Wilkesville.

Drawing Stories

In Harmar, the process began with elders recalling events from the past. For example, Mr. Cheseman, who runs the bait store on the dock in Harmar, told Schenkel stories of the Ohio River and its role in the town's history. Schenkel then shared these stories with teachers who in turn told them to kids participating in art workshops. Schoolchildren made drawings of what stories such as Mr. Cheseman's evoked in their imagination—drawings that depicted, for example, Fort Harmar which had been built by the first settlers and the Knox Boat Yard where ocean-going vessels were built during the 19th century.

The fort in the Harmar mural is a combination of 16 children's drawings. "Each picture was different," recounts Schenkel. Some kids drew the fort's pickets as a horizontal band, others added turrets, windows, and doors. "The children and I picked out the elements of the various pictures they liked—a gate from one, a turret from the other. I drew out and foreshortened these elements and connected them."



Courtesy of Rural Action

Participants work on the Harmar mural.

Members of the community then took Schenkel and the children's designs and transformed them into the final mural. They received minimal training. "With the younger kids, we did teach them how to draw a rounded object to give it a three-dimensional effect by mixing various shades of paint," says Schenkel. "But we left it pretty open to retain the 'brushiness' they'd have."

The actual painting was done on the Harmar Elementary gym stage littered with cans of paint and stacks of drawings. The artists included Marietta College students Josh Crook, Sarah Hill, and Pam Porter as well as Lori Coutts, a local artist at the time, and Marietta High graduate Chrissy Littler, who put in 350 volunteer hours.

When it came time to mount the panels, 15 volunteers set up scaffolding against a concrete building and got to work. "Children would come out and sing thank you songs to the volunteers," says Schenkel. "Their parents cooked lunches in the gym for the workers."

In Harmar, as in all the communities which have collaborated to produce a mural, the entire community celebrated the mural's dedication with food and music.

Leapfrog Effect

A veteran of all three completed projects and currently involved with a fourth, Schenkel still works as a volunteer in spite of having completed his VISTA service. "I want to continue to do this as long as I can. There is a leapfrog effect. People in one community see what happened in another and want to do it in their own town."

The process varies from place to place. When he first comes into a community, Schenkel always tries to find a way of "establishing a rhythm." In Trimble, he started out with an art class at the local senior center. Tapping into school classes and activities as he did in Harmar wasn't an option in Shawnee since he started the project during the summer months. Instead he established contact by frequenting parks or working on the town's sidewalk. Says Schenkel, "I'd be sketching and kids would come up to see what I was doing. What is different about all these ways of

establishing a rhythm is that muralists usually do not have time to spend getting the community involved."

The one constant in all the projects is extensive community involvement. That can be seen in the community of Wilkesville, a village of 200 in Vinton County, located about 65 miles southwest of Harmar. The Wilkesville project is in the community development stage, nearly ready to enter the design phase. Participants hope to complete a mural on the town's community building by June 1998.

Although Route 32, the so-called Appalachian Highway, passes nearby, Wilkesville is very much off-the-beaten track and anxious for anything that will foster community development. As 26-year-old VISTA volunteer Suzanne Wheeler puts it, "People want more things here rather than having to drive the roughly 25 miles to Athens. They want small businesses and the jobs they would bring." Wheeler is the Wilkesville project organizer and Mural Project coordinator for Rural Action.

During the past year, Wheeler has helped plan community and school events that allow her to collect ideas, recruit participants, and conduct training. For instance, she held a mural celebration at the

local school involving the whole town. Also she and elementary school art teacher Rob Leonard have organized summer art classes in which children work with clay, weave, and do photography projects. "These classes provide training for the children and enable project staff to see which kids are interested in the arts and will consistently show up for mural project activities. I also think they broaden the children's sense of creativity because they get to do things they ordinarily don't get to do."

Home of the Wilton Civic Association, the community center on whose walls volunteers will paint the mural is routinely the setting for bean dinners, meetings, family reunions, and Christmas and Easter songfests. The Association itself has served as a sounding board for the community's



Courtesy of Rural Action

After completion, volunteers mounted the Harmar, Ohio, murals on the concrete sewage pump station walls.

ideas about what the mural should portray.

Wheeler is enthused about community murals because of what she calls "the steamroller effect." Says Wheeler, "Everyone is busy — making ends meet with low-wage jobs, doing household chores, participating in church and civic activities, and raising families. But then they see what can happen when everyone pulls together to get things done. My focus is to help adults, children, and seniors do things they don't think they can do — like paint a mural."

The Kids' Mural

In Shawnee, children have dubbed the nearly finished paintings gracing the walls of Minnie's Restaurant "the Shawnee Kids' mural." "I like that," says Schenkel, "because their claiming the work demonstrates a sense of ownership."

Shawnee — located on Sunday Creek, a tributary of the Hocking River in southern Perry County — is in the middle of what was once a major center of Appalachian Ohio's coal industry. Together with a number of now half-empty towns which sprang up along both Sunday and Monday Creeks during the 1870s and 1880s, Shawnee is known as one of the "Little Cities of the Black Diamonds."

While still a VISTA volunteer, Schenkel began working in 1995 with one of Rural Action's partners, the Sunday Creek Associates community development corporation, to launch a mural project in Shawnee. He spent a good part of 1995 and 1996 working with kids in a summer youth program and visiting with the local townspeople. By September 1995, Schenkel, with the help of community artist Kim Blosser and Rural Action VISTA volunteer Elaine Higgins, was ready to supervise the painting of a mural on two sides of Minnie's Restaurant. The group has worked on the mural each of the last three falls. Still a work-in-progress, the mural should be completed in the early spring of 1998.

Minnie's is one of the first buildings visitors see when approaching Shawnee. It is located between the town's central park and the post office and across the street from the Tecumseh Theater, a 19th



Over 100 people attended the Trimble Township Mural open house held on September 21, 1997, in the Trimble High School cafeteria.

century building which the Sunday Creek Associates is currently attempting to restore. "Townspeople wanted the structure spiffed up," says Schenkel.

The children's sense of ownership of the mural is warranted. For example, Schenkel's design of the Shawnee mural was partly inspired by a poem written by Chuck Hebrard, a boy who would regularly come to mural workshops but almost never spoke. Finally, he shared his

**"PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN
APPALACHIAN OHIO FEEL
THEY GET A BAD RAP."**

poetry with workshop participants, both adults and children. Among them was a piece that asked "Where was I?" and answered, "I was invisible / the outer world / could not see me ... / where was I / no one knew / the outer world ... / did not know me ... / the outer world / pretends you're not." According to Schenkel, Hebrard's poem "was about growing up in Shawnee and visiting nearby cities. When he would tell people he was from Shawnee, they would roll their eyes."

Looking Out the Window

Over 100 people came to Trimble High School in Glouster last September

for the unveiling of the first completed Hocking Valley mural. Trimble and Glouster, two more of the "Little Cities of the Black Diamonds," lie side-by-side in the narrow Sunday Creek Valley, just south of Shawnee.

The 42-by-15 foot mural takes up an entire wall in the Trimble High cafeteria. The painting gives the impression that the viewer is looking out the window of Charlie Beshara's five-and-dime store over the town as it once was. In reality, the view is a collage of buildings and scenes from other surrounding coal communities, as well as from Glouster itself. Trees and other verticals, in the style of American painter Thomas Hart Benton, divide the painting into sections.

The Trimble Township mural is based partially on black-and-white photographs Schenkel collected from local families. In addition to much informal interaction with townspeople, Schenkel found that a senior citizens' painting class was an important source of both photographs and the stories that helped Schenkel understand the pictures' significance.

Students helped design the collage. Although most involved were Trimble High School students who were members of Sylvia Marr's painting class, some were high school students from Marietta who as Harmar Elementary students had

been part of Schenkel's first mural project. It was also high school students who helped transfer the drawings to the wall, and some helped with the painting as well.

At the open house, townspeople viewed the mural with utter fascination. Phyllis Koons of Glouster, a school employee for 23 years, was effusive. She had participated in the project by supervising the children, by counseling Schenkel on relations with school staff, by helping with the open house's organization, and by generally keeping things moving. When viewing the finished mural, she focused on the image of Charlie Beshara. "Charlie's was the place where everyone hung out," Koons remembers fondly. Stories still abound about Beshara, a Lebanese immigrant who was much beloved for innumerable acts of kindness: giving a "pop" to a prisoner digging a ditch, buying a prom dress for a teenager, buying football cleats for a boy.

Koons also pointed out the painted figure of Ida Mae Stoneburger, the mother of an old classmate, who is portrayed piecing a quilt. The granddaughter of German and English pioneers, Stoneburger came to the open house to see the finished product of a process in which she had been so instrumental. Schenkel reports that Stoneburger, after having met him at the senior art class, "brought things she thought would help — a bag of paint rags,

actual items to be depicted in the mural such as a Morton salt box or a Maxwell House coffee can, photographs, including a picture of Charlie Beshara. And she would bring people to the mural site who would share stories."

Hershel Shifflet greeted townspeople at the door. Shifflet, a township trustee

"WHEN GEOFF IS IN THE BUILDING, KIDS WANT TO BE WHERE HE IS. HE HAS LET THEM IN ON THE PROCESS."

and school employee, frequently takes people on tours of the community mural. "This means a lot to Glouster," he says. He and his wife are proud of their role in the project. "We helped Geoff—even fed him a couple of times," he laughs.

Art teacher Marr credits much of the mural's impact to Schenkel's abilities. "He's unbelievable as a communicator. Children and community people are not alienated, not a single one. When Geoff is in the building, kids want to be where he is. He has let them in on the process."

Economic Payoffs

Even with the hours put in by volunteers, young and old, and cutting corners on materials costs, producing a community mural is an expensive proposition.

For example, a newspaper article gave \$10,000 as the total cost for the Harmar murals. So far, the murals project has have received funding from the Ohio Appalachian Arts Initiative, the Ohio Arts Council, and assorted local churches and community groups.

Economic development, it is hoped,

will be one of the payoffs of this investment. Rural Action hopes to continue raising funds to support one or more murals corridors. "Once enough murals are on-line," explains Wheeler, "the communities can join together to promote them as a tourist attraction. The tourists, in turn, can support local businesses such as restaurants and bed-and-breakfasts." Income-producing, spin-off projects are also beginning to appear. In Harmar, for example, Marietta College volunteers, with the aid of Schenkel and Garoza, have helped to produce a children's book based on the kids' experiences while doing the murals.

Harder to calculate but no less crucial, the inculcation of some much needed community pride is, according to

Schenkel and Wheeler, another benefit of the murals project. Wheeler observes, "People who live in Appalachian Ohio feel they get a bad rap." The "bad rap" includes negative media images and coverage in big city papers and Appalachian children's having their speech corrected by teachers. Says Schenkel, "The people's response is to withdraw inward and not see much beyond themselves or their community. Some are afraid to take chances."

The murals project has at least made a dent in the problem. Wheeler reports that "the Athens paper never has anything good to say about Glouster, but they did report about their mural project. And when the people in Glouster see a local person like Charlie Beshara remembered with honor, it makes them feel better about living here."



Muralist Geoff Schenkel and art teacher Sylvia Marr proudly pose in front of the mural at Trimble High School during the open house.

Michael Maloney

Will arts and heritage projects be enough to launch a revitalization of Southeast Ohio communities? Only time will tell, but a critical mass of resources is gradually being assembled. Wayne Lawson, director of the Ohio Arts Council, is challenging other state agencies to join in the funding of projects promoting the area's cultural and natural resource assets. Grants of up to \$95,000 would be made through the Ohio Hill Country Re-

gional Heritage project. And if Rural Action director Carol Kuhre and her staff have their way, each project will involve grass-roots level organizing to help communities to discover for themselves what assets they have to develop.

The murals project—and the collaborative, community-wide process it embodies—is only one way of getting communities to start thinking about community planning and development. But

coupled with other strategies, Rural Action's Arts Heritage program has certainly given an important boost to community spirit in Marietta and in the Hocking Valley. **NET**

Michael Maloney, a native of Eastern Kentucky, lives in Cincinnati and teaches Appalachian Studies at the University of Cincinnati and Chatfield College. He is project manager of the Ohio Appalachian Arts Initiative.

THE ARTS LEAD THE WAY

Appalachian Ohio's cultural heritage is increasingly becoming an important weapon in the battle against economic decline.

Appalachian Ohio communities need to be rebuilt because they have, like much of Appalachia, experienced "boom-and-bust" economic cycles. Ohio's coal industry is a good example. Beginning in the late 1800s, the coal industry had sparked the growth of such towns as Trimble, Glouster, Corning, and Shawnee in the Hocking River Valley. Today, Hocking Valley towns survive with a reduced economic and population base—and perhaps a form of psychological depression—due to a long history of community decline and out-migration. The only economic sector still growing in many Ohio Appalachian counties is government and social services.

Rural Action director Carol Kuhre has become one of Appalachia's foremost community development specialists. Rural Action is a multicounty community development corporation based in Athens and Trimble, Ohio. Kuhre espouses a community development approach to deal with Appalachian Ohio's widespread economic decline, an approach that refuses to do "for" people but rather generates a grass-roots community renewal process that respects each community's uniqueness. It is, she says, "a proactive approach to community regeneration." The community murals project which has, so far, resulted in works of art in Harmar on the Muskingum River and in the Hocking River Valley towns of Shawnee and Glouster, is a prime example of this approach to community development.

Michelle Decker, who works with Kuhre as Rural Action's program manager, agrees. Rural Action wants the communities that have completed murals to lend other towns a hand. "They will look at criteria, share what they know with other communities. A mural is a living document of community history, but it's also a tool to share history, beauty, and heritage. Communities need technical help with marketing, but they need to lead the process."

Rural Action is not the only agency to incorporate cultural heritage and arts into community development efforts. The Ohio Arts Council, for example, has launched the Ohio Appa-

lachian Arts Initiative. Based in Brown County's Chatfield College, the Initiative promotes the celebration of traditional Appalachian arts and crafts through grants, demonstration projects, an Arts-in-Education program, and publications such as a newsletter and a directory of Appalachian artists and craftpersons. The Ohio Arts Council has also established the Ohio Hill Country Regional Heritage Area, which has developed a long-range plan for assisting communities in identifying potential historic and natural resource attractions.

Other heritage-based organizations include the Sunday Creek Associates, which worked in partnership with Rural Action to realize the Shawnee mural project and is working to restore six historic buildings in southern Perry County; Ohio River Trails, the New Richmond, Ohio-based organization dedicated to attracting tourists to the 452-mile long Ohio River shoreline; and Rural Appalachian Ohio Revisited (ROAR). ROAR, organized by Deanna Tribe of Ohio State University Extension Service, is renovating a former school building at Vinton County's Lake Hope as a heritage center. Local travel and tourism groups have collaborated to develop a brochure touting local historical and natural resource points of interest.

The Governor's Office of Appalachia, which administers the Washington, D.C.-based Appalachian Regional Commission's (ARC) economic development programs in the state, supports these and other community development efforts. It was an ARC grant, for example, which helped Shawnee to begin to restore its Main Street and to promote itself as a tourist attraction. Other projects focus on sustainable agriculture, reuse of waste products, and dealing with health issues.

All together, these individuals and agencies are dedicated to the proposition that, in the words of a Rural Action proposal, "the arts have the capacity to rebuild the fabric of a community where that fabric has been torn apart by years of poverty and struggle; to construct bridges across barriers of class, race, gender, and age; to interpret and celebrate the past, present, and future of a community; to replace despair and apathy with hope and creative action."

—Michael Maloney

No Frills Education

by Charlotte Fairlie

Rural Appalachian students who never quite saw themselves as college material learn differently at Southwestern Ohio's Chatfield.

Southwestern Ohio's Brown County is typical of the Appalachian counties bordering the Ohio River between Cincinnati and the mountains to the east. The agricultural landscape of corn and soybean fields is liberally dotted with small, faded towns and villages that look as if they are struggling to find their economic place in a modern world.

Achieving a college education in a rural setting such as this can be tough, especially for those who have already started their families. For many, the barrier is financial. Tuition at the closest four-year institution, Wilmington College in neighboring Clinton County, ranges from \$275 to \$525 per credit hour. Those with small children have the additional expense of child care. Geographic isolation presents another challenge: Attending state universities such as the University of Cincinnati usually involves a drive of over an hour each way.

Other obstacles are less tangible. The people of Southwestern Ohio are accustomed to and enjoy the pace of rural life. Many express a dislike of city driving, a reluctance to move away from family and

community, and distaste for—or sometimes fear of—larger institutions. Even the relatively small local community colleges can, with their concrete structures, seem impersonal and forbidding. Colleges can also be culturally intimidating, reflecting the urban, middle-class values of traditional academia within which Appalachian students may not feel at ease.

Faced with such difficulties, many individuals believe they are not able to succeed in college or are simply not interested in entering a learning community where they might feel like outsiders. In Brown County, however, Chatfield Col-

lege offers a singular alternative: an accessible, hospitable educational environment specifically designed to meet the needs of the local population.

Teaching Life Skills

Upon entering the tree-lined driveway at Chatfield, visitors are drawn to the beauty and serenity of the campus. It is immediately apparent that this is no typical college. Concrete blocks and vast parking lots are nowhere to be seen. Canada geese cruise a lake, and turtles bask beside a heart-shaped pond, surrounded by stately pines. A statue of St. Ursula stands as eloquent testimony to the college's rich history. Although the saint's two thick braids make her look as strong as a Viking, her cloak gently shelters the figures of 11 young women.

Chatfield College was founded by the Brown County Ursulines, a religious order that, since 1845, had run a boarding school for girls in the village of St. Martin, located in the northern part of the county. As the demand for a boarding school education declined, it became clear to the Ursulines that they must redirect their mission to higher education, responding to the need they saw in the community. In 1971, the college—named for the founder of the convent, Julia Chatfield—was separately incorporated as a three-year, independent Catholic college.

Ask almost any staff or faculty member about the college's mission statement, and he or she will probably be able to tell you that Chatfield exists to "teach life skills, via a liberal arts education, to individuals who might not be able to attend college if Chatfield didn't exist." That mission is clearly the



Chatfield College

Chatfield's grounds frequently provide solace to students.

driving force behind the endeavors and attitudes of all who work here. The open admissions policy allows the educationally disadvantaged to make a fresh start, and the liberal arts emphasis teaches all students "how to think, how to speak, and how to make informed decisions," says Sister Margaret Anne Dougherty, Chatfield's new president.

Rather than focusing on the associate's degree as an end in itself, the goal at Chatfield is to prepare students to go on to baccalaureate programs and take on leadership roles in their communities. Sister Margaret Anne argues that "a liberal arts education is a long-term education, not a short-term solution" that best equips students to be adaptable in a volatile job market. Chatfield, she says, gives students "a chance to begin."

Going the Extra Mile

A commuter college, Chatfield attracts students from the surrounding counties, most of which are classified as "Appalachian" by the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Washington, D.C.-based agency whose goal is to foster economic development in the region. The average age of Chatfield students is 31, 80 percent are female, and many are the first in their families to go to college. Classes meet just once a week, allowing students to dovetail college, job, and family responsibilities more easily and helping them to reduce driving and day-care expenses.

Although growing, the number of students on the St. Martin campus (Chatfield also runs an outreach program in Lower Price Hill, an urban Appalachian neighborhood in Cincinnati) is only 171, resulting in an intimacy that gives many nervous students the confidence to enroll. Intimidated by the comparatively institutional feel of community colleges or confused by the red tape of a larger four-year college, students speak frequently of Chatfield's being "like family," a place where they feel "comfortable."

The small number of students allows the equally tiny staff of 13 to provide a high level of personal service. It is not unusual for financial aid director Becky Cluxton to spend over an hour advising an anxious student. Knowing that an academic routine is alien to many, admissions director John Cooper personally calls all

family funerals, and taken bags of groceries to students in financial crisis. Nurtured by this emphasis on their individual needs, students thrive and grow both intellectually and spiritually. Many speak proudly of their new levels of self-esteem. As one student says, "I have become more open and willing to try new things. It's easy to grow as a person."

Chatfield's alumni surveys repeatedly testify to the college's having given the students the self-confidence to begin a lifelong educational journey. Over 70 percent of graduates go on to four-year colleges such as Wilmington College in Wilmington, Ohio, or The College of Mount Saint Joseph in Cincinnati, a transfer rate that far exceeds the average for community colleges. Early in their Chatfield careers, students are encouraged to meet with advisors at their chosen institutions, and admissions di-

rector Cooper always has ease of transfer in mind as students register for classes.

Chatfield's Charm

Another facet of the program encouraging successful transfer and distinguishing Chatfield from traditional community colleges is its unusual status as a three-year college, accredited to offer a year of course work beyond the associate's degree. Many graduates use this year to cross-register with another institution in the Greater Cincinnati Consortium of Colleges and Universities, retaining their ties to Chatfield while also venturing out into such larger communities as Cincinnati's Xavier University.

A third year at Chatfield also makes sound economic sense to many students since the college's tuition has remained stable at \$153 per credit hour for the last five years, substantially lower than most independent colleges. Such a reasonable tuition is

made possible through Chatfield's "no frills" model of higher education. The college has no food service, no sports facilities, and no student union. Two small



The library, the President's office, and the development office are all housed in what was once the old Ursuline laundry.

students who do not show up for their first day of class, reminding them to come and checking that all is well.

Cooper believes that this degree of concern stems partly from the Catholic philosophy of education that "focuses on the whole person: body, mind, and soul." Certainly, whatever the motivation, staff



Students often spend time in the College's small library.

interest in student welfare reaches far beyond the boundaries of their job descriptions. Administrators and support personnel have helped care for children, attended

buildings house the administration, library, and computer center, while classes meet in an old red brick gym building. At lunchtime, the president, staff, faculty, and students eat sack lunches together in the lounge, sharing a small microwave.

Norman Smith, dean of academic and student services, points out that "most of our students have busy lives and no desire or need for luxuries such as student unions and sports complexes. They know that what Chatfield is about is an education."

While modest facilities are part of Chatfield's distinct charm, they can also be frustrating. Classes of over 15 students must be held in a corner of the gym, a noisy and drafty learning environment. Opened two years ago, the learning center, where students receive individual instruction from peer tutors, has been squeezed into the one-room library. Business and financial aid operations share one small office. As the student body has grown by nearly 25 percent, from 137 in 1992 to 1997's enrollment of 171, the shortage of space becomes increasingly acute.

Teaching at Chatfield

Yet the most remarkable evidence of Chatfield's low-cost program is the absence of full-time faculty. While many colleges have learned to balance their budgets by leaning heavily on adjunct instructors, at Chatfield the entire curriculum is taught by part-timers. Some are the typical "academic nomads," piecing together careers in a difficult market, but many more have taught at Chatfield for years, combining one or two courses with retirement or another career, often in business or teaching at a nearby high school. These instructors form the "core faculty," a system the college has developed whereby those who have taught for an extended period of time are directly involved in college decision-making. Their devotion to Chatfield and its students is extraordinary.

Terry Murphy, who retired to Brown County after a long career in Ohio's public schools, has taught history at Chatfield for three years. Noting the wide age range of his Chatfield students, he says, "The common denominator for all of them is that they question their own ability to be successful at the college level." Showing them they can be successful is a key element of Murphy's classes: "The beauty of

teaching at Chatfield is that the class sizes and the environment allow those of us who teach here to pursue high academic standards and, at the same time, create in each of our students an attitude of success and an enjoyment of learning for

learning's sake."

Murphy's enthusiasm and commitment are shared by most of his colleagues. At faculty meetings, instructors commonly speak of the personal rewards they gain from teaching at Chatfield. Roger Courts,

More Than Just a Beautiful Place Valerie Atherton

When asked to describe Chatfield College, I always seem to get caught up in the beauty of the place. What first comes to my mind are the soft, rolling hills, the majestic trees that have stood guard around the campus for over 100 years, and the serenity that envelopes and cradles you even when the world is trying to crush you.

Chatfield, however, is more than just a beautiful place. Chatfield is one of the best colleges I have ever attended—if not the best.

I have attended huge universities where not only are you not known, but you are also completely lost in the shuffle. I've sat in classrooms that are really auditoriums filled with 300 other nameless faces. I've attended colleges where the most important thing is the sports department. I've seen the faces of people who are completely lost in the class, but nobody cares. I've also been the face in the crowd needing more explanation and never getting it.

Chatfield, on the other hand, is able to do what no other place I have ever seen do: Chatfield reaches people.

A number of students here would never have survived in a big university. No, these people are not "dumb"—far from it! They are, perhaps, insecure. They have been out of school for a long time, they have been beaten up by life (which I can truly empathize with), or they may just have financial difficulties (again, I can empathize). I have never seen a college that can take someone who is insecure and quiet and transform her

into a confident, well-spoken individual. Chatfield gives those who go there a sense of empowerment.

I have seen what other places offer. I have experienced what Chatfield is. I have seen develop—in others and in myself—the courage to go on. That courage to take a bigger bite of the educational pie is the greatest gift Chatfield has to offer any and all of her students.

I would love to see Chatfield grow and become a four-year college. But if that growth destroys the uniqueness of Chatfield, then I would rather she stayed small, tucked away in the security of the guardian trees. **NAT**

A recent Chatfield College graduate, Valerie Atherton is pursuing an English degree at the College of Mount Saint Joseph, Cincinnati.



Charlotte Fairlie

Valerie Atherton.

who has taught science at the college for 12 years, often tells new faculty members how he arrives in the late afternoon, drained from a full day teaching in the public schools, and leaves at the end of the

evening, his energy renewed by the contact with Chatfield students.

This awareness of Chatfield as an empowering and transforming experience is sensed by both faculty and students, re-

sulting in a stimulating and supportive classroom environment.

A Balancing Act

For Chatfield to continue to stimulate and support in today's competitive academic climate, however, the college must grow while remaining true to its vision of providing an affordable education to Appalachian students. In order to keep tuition costs low, enrollment must meet goals that will inevitably strain the physical plant. If the college is to provide its students with the life skills necessary in the contemporary workplace, computer technology and the staff to support it must be continually expanded and upgraded. Already, the most painful challenge for current staff members is figuring out how to maintain the extraordinary level of personal interest they take in the lives of the students.

As Chatfield moves, in the words of Sister Margaret Anne, "from its infancy to its adolescence," it continues to tread new ground with few, if any, models from which to learn. Public community colleges tend to place less emphasis on the liberal arts and preparation for a bachelor's degree. Meanwhile, many independent two-year colleges are closing their doors, and three-year colleges are virtually unknown. Other colleges in Appalachia offer special programs to assist students facing difficulties in entering college, but such programs may be short-term and take place within a traditional college setting. Its unusual mission has placed Chatfield College in a league of its own.

On graduation day, however, concerns about the future are set aside, and the success of Chatfield's innovative approach becomes joyfully apparent. Ritual speeches are kept unusually short, allowing time for Dean Smith to read personal statements from all graduates as they receive their diplomas. One metaphor follows another as students strive to sum up the essence of Chatfield College: "The mouse that roared ... the island oasis of higher education ... a hidden diamond in Ohio ... the poetic majesty that is Chatfield." Well-prepared to move on in their lives, these graduates know that their Chatfield experience has been unique. **Net**

Charlotte Fairlie is currently director of library and academic support services and is on the faculty at Chatfield College.



Charlotte Fairlie

Vickie Napp.

A Part of the Family

Vickie Napp

Six months ago, I was at a time in my life when I began to feel as if I were dying inside.

I have always been one to love learning different things and meeting people. My children are the biggest part of my life. I have six, and they keep me very busy. After I lost the ability to have any more children, I felt that a big part of me had been taken away.

Then my mother, who is very dear to me, has gotten to the point that we will lose her to lung disease. My life was falling apart, and it became time to redefine myself.

Sister Miriam was a sweet, much loved lady who, in addition to having established Chatfield years ago, was also involved in providing various social services in my hometown of Fayetteville, Ohio. She told me I needed to go to school, get a good education, and start to make a life for myself and my babies. Sister would tell me that a happy mom would make a happy family and that I needed to trust God. She went

home to be with the Lord, and as if from beyond the grave, a flyer from Chatfield College came in the mail. I felt the time was right to start a new part of my life and that this was the sign for which I'd been waiting.

The next day, I called Chatfield to set up an appointment to see what path I would take. That day was the beginning of a new life for me. The people at Chatfield made me feel like I was part of the family. They have been just as supportive as my own family has been. I strongly feel that without the love and support that I have received at Chatfield, I would not have been able to achieve the heights that I have. I have regained my self-assurance and can now face the road that lies ahead of me with the courage and strength that it takes to achieve greatness.

I hope that I can give back the love and support that the school has given to me and my children. **Net**

A Chatfield College freshman, Vickie Napp plans to earn an education degree.

THE NEW YORK MILK STRIKES

Edythe Ann Quinn

STRIKE!

It is a word people hardly ever associate with the dairylands of America. Instead, they usually picture idyllic scenes, contented black-and-white cows pastured on green hillsides, neat red barns, and satisfied farmers urging us to "Drink Milk."

Angry mobs; state troopers firing at fleeing strikers; protesters staging demonstrations; union organizing, with the most radical members being Eastern European immigrants; union leaders accused of Communism; strike votes splitting families and setting neighbor against neighbor: These aren't the usual images of the dairy industry, but indeed these are images reflecting a long history of labor struggles on the part of milk producers. From the late 1800s to the current crisis in dairy farming, milk strikes — at times accompanied by violence — have erupted in the dairylands, including those New York counties federally designated as part of the Appalachian region.

An Unholy Alliance

In June 1894, New York City Milk Shed farmers went on strike. The milk shed is the multicounty region from which milk flows to the huge New York City market. It was not the first milk strike in the Empire State; a small local action had occurred in 1883 in Orange County, which at the

For over 100 years, dairy farmers in Appalachian New York have tried — and failed — to find a way to earn a living wage.

time served as the milk shed for the city. But the 1894 action encompassed more territory and producers as the railroads extended the borders of the milk shed into central, northern, and southern tier counties. Many in the milk shed were descendants of Yankee farmers from Massachusetts and Connecticut. Others were long-established German and Irish immigrants, while still others traced their history to colonial settlers. Although the strike failed due to the strikers' poor organizing skills and duplicitous penetration by the dealers, it sent a clear message: To succeed, dairy farmers must be effectively organized. Beginning in 1882, the dealers, those middlemen between the farmers and the consumer, had organized themselves and, despite some court-ordered reorganizations, grew ever stronger and bolder in their demands and control of processing and prices.

Thus in 1916, when the farmers found the dealers' price unacceptable, the Dairymen's League, organized in 1907 and reformed in 1916, called another strike. On October 1, the League ordered its members to withhold their milk from the market. After two weeks dedicated to drying up the milk supply flowing to New York City, the League got its higher price. After this initial victory, the Dairymen's League (Dairyalea) gained official status as the farmers' cooperative. But Dairyalea quickly fell prey to politics and dealer



Milk strikes began with a small local action in Goshen, N.Y., on March 19, 1883.

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.
Courtesy of New York History, Cooperstown, N.Y.

manipulation and became, in fact, a milk dealers' company union.

In his 1941 *Seven Decades of Milk*, an autobiographical account of the New York dairy farmers' struggles, John J. Dillon blasted the unholy alliance of the Big Three: Borden's Milk Company, Sheffield's Milk Company, and The Dairymen's League. The crusading editor of *The Rural New Yorker*, Dillon excoriated the conspirators, among whom were New York governors and politicians, who sold farmers and consumers down a river of milk.

A Losing Proposition

Throughout the 1920s, the milk price paid to the farmers was often below production costs. As Dillon put it, "The things farmers had to sell were not on a parity with the things farmers had to buy." In a 1933 letter, a dairy farmer described the economic woes the dealers created by refusing to pay the milk producers a decent price: "We are just now in desperate straits. Our taxes and interest on the mortgages are past due. Our feed bills are unpaid. Our credit is exhausted. We have no money to buy seed or other essential supplies and the spring season is near. Every can of milk we sell," the farmer wrote, succinctly summing up the situation, "leaves us further in debt than we were before we produced it."

The Milk Control Board was originally formed in 1933 to protect the producers, but in practice, the Board protected the dealers. After it became apparent that the dealers had co-opted the Milk Control Board and that both New York Governor Lehman and the state assembly had abandoned them, farmers were left with nowhere to turn. In August 1933, dairy farmers in 27 counties called a strike (seven of those counties were in Appalachian New York). They withheld their milk from market, hoping to force the dealers to pay a better price by creating a scarcity in the New York City supply.

Staging a milk strike is no easy matter. Dairy cows must be milked twice a day, strike or no strike, so farmers had to employ drastic means to handle the ever-constant milk supply. To deal with this problem and to create publicity, they often dumped milk in public, pouring it down the streets of their towns, for example. They also relieved nonstriking neighbors of their milk supply, either while it was being transported or at the milk plants. The strikers attacked the dealers' tank trucks, shooting holes in the glass liners or stopping their passage with downed trees or spiked planks across the road. These illegal actions provoked angry responses from antistrike



From New York: A Guide to the Empire State. Courtesy of New York History.

Farmers dump milk in protest at Mount Upton in Otsego County, N.Y., in 1939.

farmers and unsympathetic community members. They also brought out local law enforcement officers and state troopers who were, according to Dillon, "armed with helmets, tear gas, masks, clubs and some with guns."

The most famous attack by the state police on striking dairy farmers occurred just outside Appalachian New York in Boonville, Oneida County, on August 1, 1933. During "The Battle of Boonville," the state police assault resulted in 17 men and boys being injured. Social and literary critic Edmund Wilson, whose family's summer home was in the area, recounted the battle in *The American Earthquake: A Documentary of the Twenties and Thirties*. The state troopers, he reported, "chased people into fields and woodsheds, rushed up and beat them over

the head when they got stuck in the barbed wire fence. I saw many broken heads and bruises. There was one man who had had a gas bomb fired point-blank into his back, injuring him severely and setting his clothes afire. The troopers yelled at the farmers that they were sons of bitches, rats, Reds."

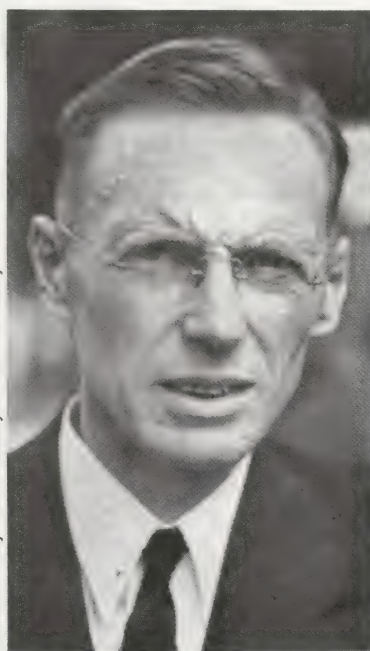
Although the farmers gained some relief through the 1933 strike, their small victories were short-lived as the dealers regained power and continued to manipulate the milk market to their profit—and to the farmers' extreme disadvantage. Strikes continued throughout the 1930s, culminating in the 1939 Milk Strike.

From Coal to Cows

The 1939 Milk Strike introduced a new player: the Dairy Farmers Union (DFU), founded in 1936 by Archie Wright. Wright's labor experiences included membership in the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW or Wobblies). The DFU attracted the smaller, poorer farmers, especially Eastern European immigrants who had moved from the anthracite and bituminous coalfields of Pennsylvania and West Virginia to the dairylands in the 1920s.

These relatively recent arrivals to the region had heavily mortgaged farms located on less desirable, hilly lands and were handicapped by being immigrants in a nativistic period. Their family farm and land ownership threatened, they were very willing to use their only available weapon—milk—and their best means—the Strike.

The Slavic dairy farmers seem to have become radicalized from their experiences either in the coal mines or, for some, in the textile



Watertown Daily Times. Courtesy of New York History.

Archie Wright.

mills. More than a few could trace their family's political activism back to "the old country," especially those who came from the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires. The bottom line was that these struggling immigrant farmers — like many of their poor WASP neighbors — were economically destitute.

In a 1996 *St. Lawrence County Historical Association Quarterly* article, political scientist Thomas J. Kriger, who has written extensively on Wright and the DFU, quotes a Delaware County, N.Y., farmer's testimony before a New York State Joint Legislative Committee to Investigate the Milk Industry.

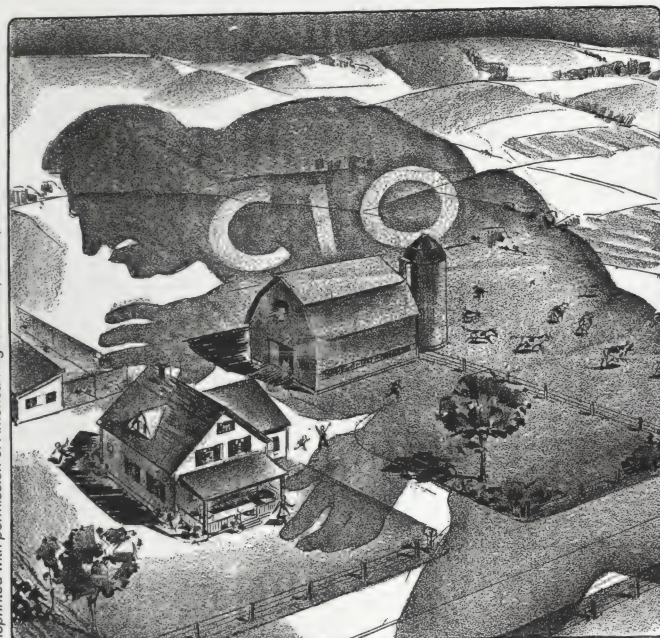
"Present returns are enough for not more than a mere existence," claimed the farmer. "Farm families may apparently be well-fed," he explained, "but many are near destitute of suitable clothing, shoes, and other present-day necessities of life."

Neighbors or Criminals?

DFU strike activities followed the now-established pattern of the strikers' withholding their own milk, dumping that of recalcitrant neighbors, and engaging in all possible means of disrupting delivery to New York City. When the strike severely slowed the flow of milk to urban consumers, an anxious and angry Governor Lehman reacted. As historian Lowell Dyson recounts in his 1970 *New York History* article, "The Milk Strike of 1939 and the Destruction of The Dairy Farmers Union," Lehman "wired the sheriffs of the eleven most affected counties, instructing them to maintain order even if it required hiring a large force of special deputies." Lehman placed New York state troopers on special alert.

The governor's public statements about the strikers' "criminal violence" may have encouraged local law enforcement officers to see their neighbors as criminals. However, at least one sheriff saw the strikers as neighbors whose economic hardships had forced them to adopt extreme measures.

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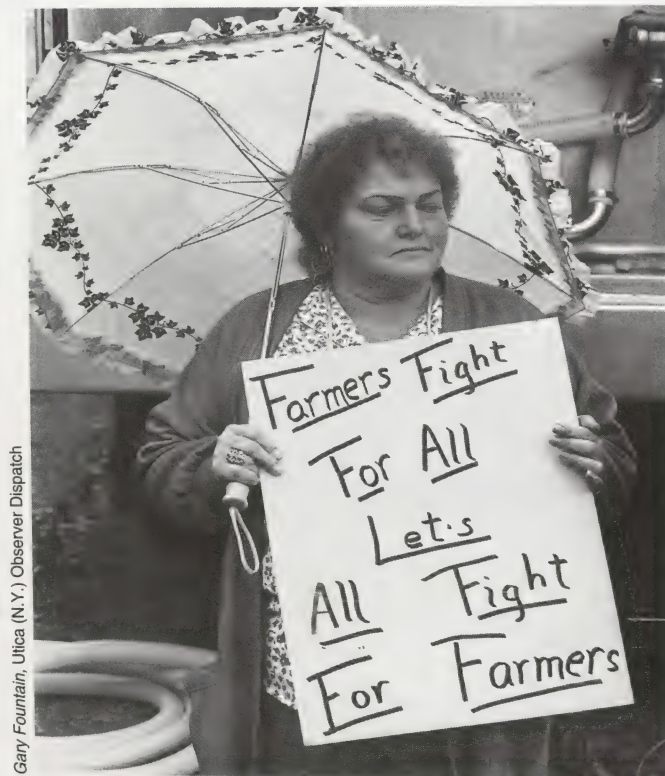
A NEW MENACE over Every Dairy Home! was the message the Dairyemen's League tried to project in this September 16, 1939, *American Agriculturist* ad.

members and leaders, women could be found on the picket lines and in demonstrations. In historian Linda G. Ford's 1994 *New York History* study of farm women and agrarian activism in the 1930s, she recounts the story of Frank and Gertrude Trinkaus, Slovenian immigrant dairy farmers of Fly Creek, N.Y., in Otsego County. Fly Creek is a community with many Slovenian

immigrant dairy farmers, some originally from the coalfields and lumber camps.

The Trinkauses joined the DFU. In August 1939, state troopers arrested Gertrude for disorderly conduct, which consisted of dumping milk from "scab" trucks. Although she was not imprisoned, her "male comrades" served several days in the Albany County jail. As in previous strikes, neighbors — and occasionally families — split over whether to withhold or to ship their milk. Bitter feelings lingered for years, affecting community relations.

The 1939 strike succeeded in bringing the producers a better price, in bringing Wright's DFU new members and status — and in bringing down upon the union and its leader the wrath of the milk dealers and their powerful allies. During the strike and in the years following, the dealers, especially the Dairyemen's League, mounted vicious attacks on the



Gary Fountain, Ulster (N.Y.) Observer Dispatch

Carol Seelman shows her support for farmers at the milk dumping in 1991.

DFU, “redbaited” Wright, and claimed that the union was a tool of CIO radicals and the Communist Party.

Critics used the DFU’s support from organized labor against them — especially that of the CIO and its leader, John L. Lewis. With the onset of the Cold War, the DFU’s opponents used anti-communist propaganda to try to fracture Eastern European immigrant support. That tactic often succeeded among Eastern Europeans, many of whom were staunchly Catholic at a time when the Iron Curtain regimes were aggressively suppressing the Church.

Under attack from without and splintered from within, the DFU steadily disintegrated. As Dyson concluded, “The disruption of the DFU effectively crushed the idea of direct collective bargaining between producers and distributors in the milk shed.”

Gary Fountain, Utica (N.Y.) Observer Dispatch



Dairy farmers, angry with an inequitable pricing system for their milk, protest by dumping the milk in a cornfield in October, 1991. The pricing structure currently used dates back to the 1930s.

Dumping Milk

During the post-World War II years, much of the nation prospered. Although the dairy farmers always lagged behind urban, industrial prosperity, they followed the advice of Cornell and other agricultural colleges and went into debt to expand and modernize their operations. Then milk prices collapsed in 1986 — and New York dairy farmers responded by again calling “Strike!” and dumping milk.

It was a familiar response for some participants. For Stanley Konchar, a Fly Creek Slovenian immigrant who was 75 at the time of the 1986 action, it was the third strike in which he had participated in his 52 years as a dairy farmer. Others, such as Konchar’s neighbor Clifford P. Brunner, were new to action.

Brunner released his milk into his cornfield, joining milk producers on strike throughout the New York Milk Shed as well as those in Maine and Wisconsin. This small strike led to a slight improvement in premium prices. By the time dairy farmers called a strike in August 1991, Brunner was an old pro at dumping milk and organizing. He gave me a copy of the strike pamphlet, which read in part: “It can be said that we are already ‘dumping’ out milk. We’re ‘dumping’ it in the wrong place, the handlers. They’re gaining at our loss.”

Hard Times

On Tuesday, January 21, 1997, I attended a strike organizing meeting in Chenango County called by the Progressive Agriculture Organization (Pro-Ag). The Pro-Ag representative spoke of the enthusiastic reception he had received from Pennsylvania dairy farmers the week before and how disappointed he was with the weak response in Appalachian New York, an area that was economically depressed and losing its dairy farmers at an alarming rate. Not convinced that strikes work, the New York farmers looked to other means, such as lobbying for legislation to allow them to join the Northeast Dairy Compact. The compact permits New England dairy farmers to set a fair price for

milk based upon actual regional production costs in contrast to the current complicated national system administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

On one thing, the dairy farmers do agree. Conditions are very bad, especially with the high cost of electricity and feed. The price of milk is so low, it doesn’t cover the cost of production or offer a dairy family a living wage. Currently, the wholesale price of milk is under \$13 per hundred weight, about \$4.50 less than a year ago and far less than the cost of production in New York state, which Cornell University and the USDA estimate to be \$15.97 per hundred weight.

Among the very vocal activists is Ken Dibbell of South New Berlin, Chenango County. At the USDA National Commission on Small Farms hearing held in Albany, N.Y., last September, he testified: “The money is in the market price currently, but it is going into the corporate coffers instead of where it belongs — in the hands of the hardest working people of this nation — dairy and livestock producers.”

At the hearing, one of three held that day across the nation, Helen Russ of Chenango County testified that she and her husband are making so little income from their family dairy farm that they qualify for food stamps. She said, “There is something wrong with a system where you are producing food for the nation and you qualify for government food.”

For over 100 years, New York state dairy farmers have struggled to get their fair share of the dealers’ profits, to be independent of the crippling control by the dealers, and to gain federal government guarantees for a fair pricing policy that provides a farm family a decent living. The concerns voiced in 1916 are echoed in 1997. Will the rolling hills again ring with the desperate cry of “Strike”? **NAT**

Edythe Ann Quinn is an assistant professor of history at Hartwick College, Oneonta, N.Y. As Hartwick Scholar-in-Residence, she is researching the influence of Eastern European immigrant dairy farmers on the 1930s milk strikes in Central New York.

Reviews

Headwaters and Hardwoods: The Folklore, Cultural History and Traditional Arts of the

***Pennsylvanian Northern Tier*
edited by Patricia M.
Macneal, Bonelyn Kyofski,
and Kenneth Thigpen
Northern Tier Cultural Alliance
Mansfield, Pa. - 1997
\$12.50 (paper)**

Headwaters and Hardwoods documents the contemporary folk arts, artists, and the cultural history of Pennsylvania's Northern Tier. The book is an outgrowth of the Northern Tier Documentation Project, an inventory conducted during the early 1990s of the folk culture of north-central Pennsylvania.

This is a collaborative effort, with academics, local history professionals, folk arts organizers, and community residents numbered among the volume's contributors. While the authors stress that the boundaries of this region are in fact fluid, the book concentrates mainly on the north-central counties of Potter, Tioga, Bradford, Cameron, Clinton, Lycoming, and Sullivan. With this broad, inclusive definition of the Northern Tier, *Headwaters and Hardwoods* offers an important contribution to Appalachian Studies.

The book's first half both focuses on the Northern Tier's history and offers commentary on its current state of affairs. The history of the Northern Tier resembles that of other rural counties rich in natural resources throughout the Appalachian region. By the middle of the 19th century, extractive industries — particularly coal and timber — dominated the area's economy. County populations swelled as coal and lumber camps dotted the Northern Appalachian hills; as evidenced by the grand architecture of the period, county seat towns enjoyed the bulk of what capital stayed within the area.

Local populations became increasingly diverse as large numbers of migrants arrived from the New England and Middle

Atlantic States and from Western and Eastern Europe, supplemented by somewhat smaller populations of Jewish, Amish, and African American families. Kenn Reagle's chapter, "The Last Raft: A Lumberman's Legacy," and Leonard Parucha's examination of mining in the Northern Tier in "The Kettle Creek Coal Mining Company and the Slovaks Who Mined There" both provide case studies illustrating these larger trends.

When it turns its attention to the more contemporary changes experienced by the Northern Tier, *Headwaters and Hardwoods* once again describes developments and problems familiar to students of Central and Southern Appalachia. Among the significant challenges facing the Northern Tier are declines in manufacturing; a rise in service sector employment, particularly among women; increases in tourism; and an aging population due to the out-migration of younger people in search of employment and the in-migration of retirees in search of less expensive, safer communities.

The book reminds us, however, that in the midst of these social and economic changes, Northern Tier folk arts and folk artists continue to thrive. It is this fact that dominates the collection's latter half. Descriptions of significant folk artists and folklore follow brief overviews of the counties in which they live and work. Riflemaking, spinning, weaving, quilting, and music are among the local cultural traditions highlighted in this section of the book.

Some of the most engaging chapters are the ones in which the authors draw on their own personal histories during the course of documenting folk traditions. For example, in the chapter on Tioga County, "Clear the Other Side of Everywhere Ain't So Far from Here," Mansfield University associate professor of education and Tioga County native Bonelyn Kyofski writes in the first person. Included in her account are stories about folk heroes such as Ole Bull and the Giant Killer, characters in folk tales which she first heard from her grandparents.

Headwaters and Hardwoods can best be viewed as a celebration and rediscovery of place. The collaborative and di-

verse nature of its authorship results in a rich — and often very personal — text. Projects such as this offer not only an important contribution to the relatively sparse literature on Northern Appalachia, but they also serve as potential models to communities throughout the Appalachian region who are seeking to understand and document their own experiences.

— Anne-Marie Turnage

Anne-Marie Turnage is a doctoral candidate in geography and a graduate research assistant with the Regional Research Institute, West Virginia University, Morgantown, W.Va.

***Mountain Shadow: Four Appalachian Artists* a video directed by Jane Goetzman and Dorothy Weil**

produced by TV Image, Inc.
Cincinnati, Ohio - 1997
\$29.95 VHS Color Format

Mountain Shadow features frank, poignant video portraits of four successful Cincinnati artists who moved as girls from their mountain homes to the city. There, each independently discovered that she was *different*.

Bluegrass singer/songwriter Katie Laur — who moved from Henry County, Tenn., to post-World War II Detroit and later to Cincinnati — explains that when she was a child growing up in her mountain community, a community where her family was well-known, she knew her identity. But her identity seemed to dissolve in the city, except for when she was within her family where she was the lead singer for their singing sessions.

As an Appalachian person in Cincinnati, Laur had the distinct feeling that there was something wrong with her because she had not grown up listening to dulcimer music and hadn't known every verse of "Barbry Allen" from the time she could talk. Drawn to bluegrass music, Laur built a successful career as a composer and performer, and she tells her life story with engaging forthrightness. The film's editors, however, might have used the medium more effectively if they had blended more of Laur's fireside interview with her live performances.

Affrilachian (African American Appalachian) storyteller Omope Carter Daboiku was born in the small Southeastern Ohio community of Ironton. In 1972, she moved to Cincinnati. While she doesn't hide the pain involved in her transition from small-town life, at the same time she displays a sense of humor and a sanguine approach to life that have undoubtedly made getting through the day easier for this artist trying to make a living and single mother of two daughters. In the film, she tells a Jack tale—in a wonderful, distinctly Appalachian voice—to a delighted class of fourth graders. Her autobiographical stories are also impressive in their self-effacing honesty.

The third interview introduces us to Dee Smart, an art photographer who moved to Cincinnati at the age of nine. From her public relations "day job" at an Ohio retirement community, she reminisces about her imaginative childhood in Hazard, Ky., where she entertained herself by building coal castles. With self-deprecating humor, she remembers her surprise when she learned that city families had "dining rooms"; she felt that the experience of eating was diminished because of its dislocation from the smells of cooking.

In her photography, Smart continues to create an imaginative world—selecting images, then enlarging and hand-coloring them so that each one is unique. Her "ghostly gothic" art photography tends towards urban images, featuring wrought iron fences and surreal colors. Her pride in her mountain background is not sentimentalized in her art.

Poet Brenda Saylor, my personal favorite, offers perhaps the strongest, most articulate voice of the four. As she guides the camera on an unapologetic tour around the yard of her family home in Owenton, Ky., where she lives amid cars good only for parts, we hear pride in her voice as she explains that "country people don't throw things away ... they don't know when they might need them again."

Though she grew up in Eastern Kentucky, she has also lived in Tennessee, North Carolina, and Michigan. She matter-of-factly explains that she's made a conscious choice to keep her accent, an



TV Image

Brenda Saylor is featured in *Mountain Shadow*.

accent that retains its "Tennessee twang" and its "Carolina drawl."

All her moving around has taught her that "people don't know how to deal with differences," although she has clearly learned to live with hers—and to celebrate them with poetry. Author of *Poems of My People*, Saylor works as a teacher in the low-income neighborhood of Lower Price Hill in Cincinnati, where she estimates the high school drop-out rate to be at least 75 percent. "What probably hurts them most," she says, speaking of her G.E.D. students, "is knowing that they're different but not knowing why." In an eloquent, moving poetry reading in Lower Price Hill, Saylor's audience of women clearly respond to her work. Her words in "Mountain Mama" and "My People" will resonate with her film audience, too.

Viewing even one of the four video portraits that make up *Mountain Shadow* in a classroom or a church or a community meeting will, I believe, spark meaningful discussion. The film could serve as an effective introduction to a study of any number of subjects or artists from the region who deal with "insider/outsider" themes and Appalachian stereotypes. (Harriette Arnow's *The Dollmaker* comes to mind.)

Though tighter editing could make the

stories more appealing to the MTV generation, the value of the interviews is clear: Each one, and particularly Saylor's, is a compelling and inspiring examination of how individual mountain women have successfully forged their own identities as talented and productive artists in Cincinnati.

—Sandra L. Ballard

Sandra Ballard teaches English at Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tenn., and is currently co-editing the anthology, Women Writing in Appalachia, with Patricia Hudson.

Milltown Natural: Essays and Stories from a Life **by Richard Hague**

Bottom Dog Press
Huron, Ohio - 1997

\$10.95 (paper), \$19.95 (hardcover)

In the poetry and creative nonfiction of writer and high school teacher Richard Hague, there is a process that might be thought of as spiritual archeology. Just as a professional archeologist digs, cleans, and sifts through the detritus of a site to gain clues to its past, Hague's writing shows us how an alert, curious, and questioning mind performs a close examination of the world and attempts to tease meaning from it.

American Transcendentalist writers like Thoreau and Melville were just such archaeologists, attempting to split through the surface film of the everyday world and see the unseen life beyond and beneath. Thoreau had his pond, and Melville, the sea, and Hague in his latest book, *Milltown Natural: Essays and Stories from a Life*, has the upper Ohio River and its surrounding environs of creeks, alleys, strip mines, barges, and farmland.

This work is part meditation, part memoir, part family history, part regional history. Steubenville, Ohio, the milltown of the title, is a classic Rust Belt city, once a smoky, polluted, multi-ethnic, vibrant, and tormented place of steel mills and strip mines, now rapidly converting to whatever the power of Wall Street and the grit of its people will allow it to become.

What will be is not yet clear. What does become clear in the book is the image of this small city and the surrounding

Reviews

rural areas in the time of Hague's youth and young manhood. Included are essays on—among other things—snakes, the role of football in Ohio Valley culture, wearing glasses, race and ethnicity, the River, working in a butcher shop, restoring the land, and shooting pool. The stories are well-done and fit in nicely with the themes raised in the essays, but it is in the essays themselves that we find the real gems.

In each, we are treated to a rich spread of meticulous observation and recollection. These are no ivory tower meditations; each segment is thought-out viscerally. And the language is faultless, clear as a bell. He observes, for example, a black snake, "a fine animal, sleek and dry, with a dark, moist tongue that fluttered like a puff of smoke from its mouth, one with steady calm eyes and perfect round pupils, black as India ink."

For many writers, this would be enough. But in Hague's work, this accumulation of much-pondered detail frequently takes us to an edge. Once there, we suddenly plunge into another level of consciousness. In the essay "Death in the Afternoon," for instance, a boyish massacre of toads leads Hague and his friends to "lay a long hour in a kind of half-repentance. I do not know exactly what we thought, nor how we felt, nor what awful lesson we had taught ourselves. Even in such vivid moments, mystery often spreads its dark cape before and behind us, and we cannot see."

Hague offers no solutions to the problems of life to be found here. His interest is in recording the complex, memory-laden reality before him, in teaching the art of such vision to his readers and—in the essay entitled "Small Bright Things, And Flash, And Glint, And Glitter"—to his sons. "Their training in looking and seeing—their apprenticeship to concentration and awareness of the small things in the world—is in my hands."

Of course, what he hopes to teach them, he is teaching us. We can be grateful to be, for a time, in such hands.

—Michael Henson

Michael Henson is author of *Ransack*, a novel, and *A Small Room With Trouble on My Mind*, a collection of stories.

Popularizing Pennsylvania: Henry W. Shoemaker and the Progressive Uses of Folklore and History by Simon J. Bronner

Pennsylvania State University Press
University Park, Pa. - 1996
\$17.50 (paper), \$45.00 (hardcover)

In *Popularizing Pennsylvania*, folklorist Simon J. Bronner offers an engaging introduction to the life of Henry Shoemaker, a Progressive Era reformer and folklorist. Much like local color writer John Fox Jr. and pioneering ethnomusicologist Cecil Sharp, Shoemaker labored to preserve and popularize mountain stories and the culture those stories reflected. However, while Fox and Sharp publicized the folk culture of the relatively more isolated reaches of Central Appalachia, Shoemaker made the mountains of Central and Western Pennsylvania his life's work.

From the 1910s through the 1950s, Shoemaker was an acknowledged expert on Appalachian Pennsylvania's folk customs and traditions. He was a wealthy newspaperman with business interests and homes in Altoona, Lock Haven, and Harrisburg, Pa. Shoemaker also served as the U.S. ambassador to Bulgaria in the 1930s, in addition to holding numerous other political and civic positions.

Still, he insisted that his driving ambition was to collect and publish stories from the mountains, an ambition he achieved by publishing tales in his paper, the *Altoona Tribune*, and in books such as *Pennsylvania Mountain Stories*, *Penn's Grandest Cavern*, and *North Mountain Mementos*. In addition to pursuing his literary career, Shoemaker served as chair of the Pennsylvania State Historical Commission from 1923 until he departed for Bulgaria in 1930 and as the state folklorist from 1947 to 1953.

According to Bronner, a member of Pennsylvania State University's Harrisburg campus faculty, Shoemaker's contemporaries both revered and found his collection of stories, gathered from rural Pennsylvanians, suspect. Folklorists like George Korson, the director of the Penn-

sylvania Folk Festival during the 1940s, questioned Shoemaker's unwillingness to critically analyze his sources and his stories. While Korson and folklorists like Samuel Bayard were beginning to use folklore as a tool to understand folklife and culture, Shoemaker represented an older school that was less committed to the ideal of academic objectivity and more determined to popularize good stories.

Bronner does a fine job of relating the many ways in which this son of a New York millionaire introduced outsiders to rural Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, Bronner is less successful in defining and analyzing the political and social motivations that drove Shoemaker. For example, Shoemaker criticized rural people for selling their land to industrial interests but offered little comment on the tactics businesses used to encourage or entice people to sell.

When Shoemaker purchased the *Altoona Gazette* and the *Altoona Times*, Bronner tells his readers that Shoemaker did so with the intention of submerging these two labor-oriented, "radical" organs into his own more Progressive newspaper, the *Altoona Tribune*. The author, however, does not elaborate upon nor analyze the essentially conservative attitude that this action reveals. Unlike scholar David Whisnant's splendid book *All That is Native and Fine* or Darlene Wilson's excellent recent scholarship on Fox in the *Journal of Appalachian Studies*, Bronner does little to help us reconcile Shoemaker's social and political beliefs with his work as a folklorist.

Overall, however, Bronner offers an interesting and useful chronology of the personal life and public activities of Henry Shoemaker. For those of us just beginning to think about Northern Appalachia and its place in the Appalachian region as a whole, Bronner's work serves as an important introduction to the life and work of one prominent regional writer. We can only hope that it is the first word—and not the last—on this significant topic.

—Sandra Barney

Sandra Barney is an assistant professor of history at Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania, Lock Haven, Pa.

Books Worth Mentioning

Appalachian Christmas Stories compiled and edited by James M. Gifford, Owen B. Nance, and Patricia A. Hall (Ashland, Ky.: Jesse Stuart Foundation, 1997; \$9.95 paper). This small gift book celebrates the season with three short stories, three essays, and five poems: heartwarming, read-aloud works by Jesse Stuart, James B. Goode, Loyal Jones, Billy C. Clark, Thomas D. Clark, Harry Caudill, Marlin Blaine, and Jim Wayne Miller.

Fred Waring and the Pennsylvanians by Virginia Waring (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1997; \$34.95 hardcover, includes a CD with 28 selections recorded by the Pennsylvanians). The biography, written by Waring's wife of 30 years, focuses on this famous native of the small town of Tyrone, located about 15 miles northeast of Altoona, Pa. Entrepreneur Fred Waring (1900-1984), who earned stars on Hollywood Boulevard and a Congressional Gold Medal, is best known for introducing the show choir concept. Before he formed his singing band, the Pennsylvanians, in 1922, vocal music in public performances was limited to church choirs, college glee clubs, and operas. He was the first to feature vocalists with an orchestra, the first to make a full-length musical movie, the first to present a weekly television musical show. He introduced America to the songs of Irving Berlin and George Gershwin—and to his ingenious invention, the Waring Blender.

Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks' Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916-30 by Peter Gottlieb (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1987; reissued in paper, 1997; \$15.95 paper, \$29.95 hardcover). When first issued, this study received praise for its judicious use of oral histories and primary sources to create an important working-class history of African Americans who migrated from the South to Northern cities during World War I and thereafter.

Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia by Ivan Tribe (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1984; reissued in paper, 1996; \$17.95 paper). This virtuoso performance of a book is now available in paperback for the shelves of anyone interested in country music. Updated with an afterword, *Mountain Jamboree* examines with extraordinary detail and enthusiasm the roots of bluegrass and other country music that is important to the cultural history of West Virginia, Appalachia, and America.

The Evolving Self in the Novels of Gail Godwin by Lihong Xie (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University, 1995; \$30 hardcover). This literary study examines eight novels of Gail Godwin, who grew up in the North Carolina mountains though she has spent much of her life just outside Appalachia in upstate New York. "Godwin makes the search for selfhood a central theme in her fiction," writes Xie. That search involves feeling alienated from Appalachia while, at the same time, feeling embraced and trapped by it. With literary-critical terms (fair warn-

ing: Xie draws upon the particularly jargon-rich Bakhtinian theory), the study explores the process by which Godwin's female characters achieve self-definition. Of particular interest to those in Appalachian Studies are discussions of Godwin's 1987 *A Southern Family*, which includes a straight-faced account of an "angry hillbilly character," and the 1991 novel, *Father Melancholy's Daughter*, set in the Shenandoah Valley.

The Ohio Frontier: An Anthology of Early Writings edited by Emily Foster (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1996; \$29.95 hardcover). Part of the Ohio River Valley Series, this book collects a wide range of absorbing eyewitness accounts of Ohio history. Diaries, letters, travel narratives, and memoirs recreate the experiences of settlers and travelers from 1750 to 1843. The chronological excerpts record a pattern of increasing antagonism toward Native Americans and offer provocative firsthand observations by European traders, tourists, missionaries, Revolutionary War veterans, housewives, escaped slaves, land speculators, and other pioneers.

—Sandra L. Ballard

Now & Then Reviews Editor Sandy Ballard is associate professor of English at Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tenn.

Welcome to Chenango County

In Bainbridge, N.Y., on the brown Susquehanna,
the smart kids leave town. The concrete bottle
of Elmer's Glue on the factory roof

rises as high as a graveyard obelisk.
It is losing its paint:

goodbye to the white bottle,
goodbye to its orange tip,
goodbye to the smart kids.

The columned porches are falling down;
the downtown accountant mounts a flag
in her window and a hand-lettered sign:

Bankruptcies \$99 Dollars

but who can scrape it together?

The long hills do their old job
of collecting the snow, and squirrels
and foxes have excellent homes.

—Penelope Scambly Schott

Penelope Scambly Schott now calls Rocky Hill, N.J., home
but has spent quite a lot of time in a few of the small towns
just east of Binghamton, N.Y.

Reviews

Home Fires by Linda Parsons

The Sow's Ear Press
Abingdon, Va. - 1997
\$12.00 (paper)

Most of us no longer rely on a fireplace for heat. We build a fire nowadays only in response to an emotional need, not a physical one. The glow of the fireplace may comfort and embrace us when we're feeling isolated, sad, or contemplative. Or it provides all the light necessary for romance.

This is the case in Linda Parsons's impressive collection, *Home Fires*, where we are drawn to the hearth of home and family and memory but, most of all, to the heat of love and the intense, sacred power of what can pass between a man and a woman alone together in the dark.

In the first sections, the poet speaks passionately of her belief in memory and its power to teach and to bind people together. In "To My Daughter Going Off to College," she knowingly reminds the daughter of the power of memory, saying "One day you'll look in the mirror and see/ only furniture. You'll feel a great hole/ in your heart, a weight in your pocket./ You'll take these crumbs, drop them/ by an ancient moon and, in your darkest hour,/ find yourself at my door."

The growing recognition of the reality of separation — her own from her parents and grandparents and, in turn, her children's from her — leads the opening section to a sweet crescendo of sadness and longing so strong that the reader loses track of time and stops reading, his or her own melancholy bubbling up and spilling over. The first section ends with the title poem, "Home Fires," in which the poet is alone, the solitary singer, separated by death from the older generation, by age and necessity from the young ones. "I've thrown/ myself at men in black turtlenecks only to find/ that home is best after all ... Home where I walk out on the thin page/ of night, without waving or giving myself away,/ and return with my words burning like fire in the grate."

I can identify strongly with all these poems in *Home Fires* as I, too, am drawn to the role of caretaker of people and of memory and, as a poet, to the world of nature. But I must admit that it is the last section, the love poems, that were most powerful and moving for me.

This account — of a love unfolding, a heart opening up again — will surely stand as a most eloquent rebuttal to those who might dismiss the idea that anything new and profound can be said about love in this cynical age. Unlike the pretentiously anguished and self-indulgent love poems written by some of the 20-something graduate school crowd, these love poems are art because they remind us what love is intellectually and what it feels like emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

"I'll follow you into that shop of rag and bone," Parsons writes in "Book Lover."

"I'll be a leaf to mark your place in the pages/ you were saving for a long rain. I'll be the spine/ you open to the tender light." The bittersweet recognition is there in these poems that love has come late in life to strong individuals. In "So Far Afield," she says, "I am all apple tree,/ you are all pine./ You part the red cedars/ with your toes. I wave/ my petals, throw fruit/ at your feet. You rise/ to the occasion. I swing,/ like a chariot, low and sweet."

But true love is even more rare than true poetry — and just as demanding.

Linda Parsons' poetry reminds us of the fact that we should cherish and celebrate both where we find them, "each moment we have so full of grace."

— Rita Sims Quillen

Rita Sims Quillen, associate professor of English at Northeast State Technical Community College, Blountville, Tenn., is a poet, fiction writer, critic, and editor. Her most recent collection of poems is *Counting the Sums*.

Wingless Flights: **Appalachian Women in** **Fiction**

by Danny L. Miller
Bowling Green State University
Popular Press
Bowling Green, Ohio - 1996
\$35.95 (hardcover)

Because women have played so important a role in our region's literature, both as authors and as principal characters, *Wingless Flights* makes a valuable contribution to the study of Appalachian fiction.

Its six chapters — free of esoteric critical jargon — analyze the works of Mary N. Murfree, Edith Summers Kelley, Anne W. Armstrong, Emma Bell Miles, Jesse Stuart, James Still, and Harriette Arnow. The book thus covers a 70 year period, from the publication of Murfree's *In the Tennessee Mountains* in 1884 through the publication of Arnow's *The Dollmaker* in 1954. It does not include, unfortunately, the novels of Mary Lee Settle, Wilma Dykeman, or Lee Smith, all of whose work might usefully have been added to this study, nor does it mention Mildred Haun's fine 1940 short story collection, *The Hawk's Done Gone*.

Miller, associate professor of English at Northern Kentucky University, divides the books he examines into three main historical periods, each reflecting a different emphasis. The first is represented by Murfree's fiction, with its peculiar combination of the romantic idealization of younger heroines and the grim portrayal of older mountain women as victims of drudgery in



Jeff Daniel Marion

Linda Parsons.

a patriarchal culture dominated by brutal or lazy husbands given to moonshining, drinking, and feuding.

During the second period, which Miller labels "mountain gloom," writers reacted against the romanticism of Murfree's brand of local color "realism." According to Miller, that reaction began in the 1890s and continued for three more decades. Kelley's *Weeds*, published in 1923, and Armstrong's *This Day and Time*, which appeared in 1930, are Miller's examples of this more pessimistic portrait of mountain women's lives, a perspective that highlights the pervasive oppression of women, though the heroines of both these books also struggle against their victimization.

Miller devotes the major portion of his book to the third period. He associates this period with the appearance of *native* Appalachian writers in contrast to such authors as Murfree, Kelley, and Armstrong. With the exception of his discussion of Miles' 1905 work of nonfic-

tion, *The Spirit of the Mountains*, Miller traces the beginnings of this third period—and the "authenticity" it brings—to the 1930s and 1940s, which saw the publication of major novels by Stuart, Still, and Arnow.

In these writers' books, as Miller remarks, the *inner* lives of mountain women are more fully explored, with little of the condescension and much less of the stereotyping that mar the work of earlier writers. Stuart's *Trees of Heaven*, Still's *River of Earth*, and Arnow's first three novels are the texts treated in this context. For Miller, *The Dollmaker's* Gertie Nevels represents "the epitome of Appalachian womanhood."

Miller's book is most helpful when it is explicating individual works of fiction and assessing the images of women they contain. Less persuasive is his three-part division of the material—especially his comments on the second period since he concedes that "*Weeds* is more of a femi-

nist novel than an Appalachian novel." Nor do I find the movement he traces from victimization or "defeated resignation" to "endurance" and "active involvement in the struggle to survive" as clear-cut as he sometimes suggests.

Yet the book not only offers perceptive readings of individual works but also makes welcome use of the insights of such previous scholars as H.R. Stoneback, Carvel Collins, and Isabella Harris, whose unpublished dissertation research is otherwise unavailable to general readers. Perhaps the greatest strengths of this study are Miller's passionate commitment to his subject and his respect for both the obstacles mountain women have faced and the strengths they have demonstrated, an attitude expressed in his paradoxical title, *Wingless Flights*.

—John Lang

John Lang teaches American literature at Emory & Henry College, Emory, Va.

West Rock

The Appalachian Trail extends
Maine to Georgia tracing a line of
powder blue dots on oaks, maples and ash
across Connecticut right over the backbone
of West Rock.

Dad always chose the clearly marked paths
as if some law immediately enforceable existed
a few steps beyond the borders
he was never willing to break.

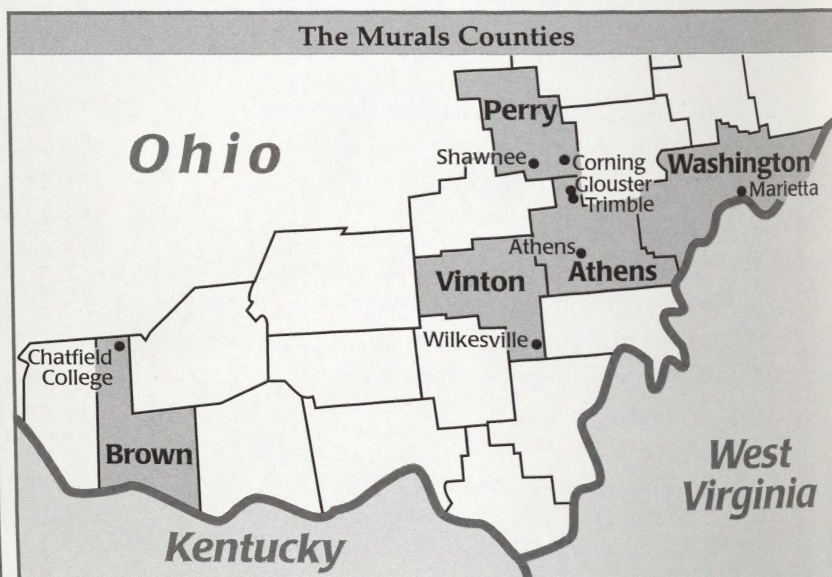
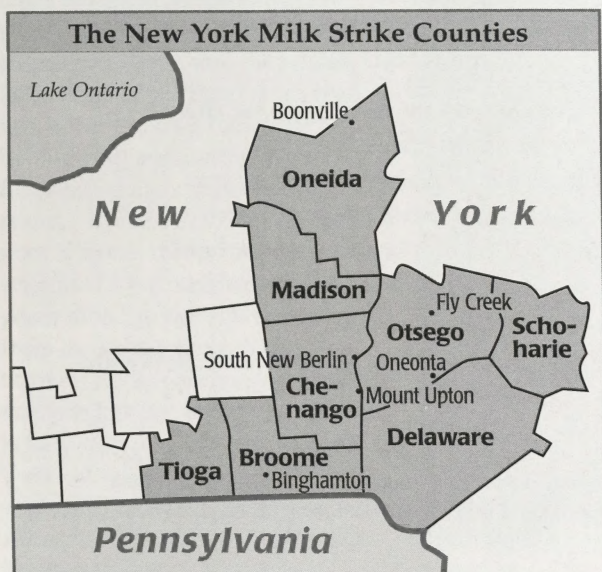
We hiked together until he had run out of
words of caution for my constant
side trips to investigate some
unknown vista invisible from the trail.

There is always this sadness we pack along with us
no matter how far we travel unable to walk
beyond in lingering always at the core of partings
draining down like a muddy stream running out from
the marrow of the mountain.

Walking alone now on the same ways we shared—
there seem to be no others—
I still hear his footsteps, his voice behind me,
the sounds shifting to create a new moment
superimposed on the old, backlit like the light
through a forest that turns shadows into trees.

—T.B. Wright

For the past three years, T.B. Wright has been poetry editor for and contributor to The Texas Review, published at Sam Houston State University. His work has been published widely and his published manuscript, Refusing Winter, is under consideration for the Breakthrough Poetry Series.





He Remembered the Lord's Prayer And That the Water Was Cold

His parents hired him out for wages.
After sixth-grade graduation
he and brother John left the home place
in Ohio near One-Leg Creek by wagon,
went all the way to Pennsylvania
to work for his father's people each summer,
his mother's people each fall. Then home
to work winter and spring. Year after year,
until the boys chose their faith at 21,
they were baptized every summer
as Dunkards, every fall as Quakers.

He remembered the Lord's prayer
and that the water was cold.

*Cold like the water will be the night his Model T
slips off the icy bridge into the frozen river.*

He shivered. His fingertips turned blue.

*Blue like the black and blue marks that will swell
on his legs from John's thrashing, grasping,
trying to pull him back under.*

He whooped and hollered after being jerked
out of the cold creek quickly, saw stars.

*Stars like those my grandfather will see
as he struggles upward, out of the river.
Stars like those in that River of Souls
in the Sky grown brother John will swim to.
Stars like those that will shine above him
on that lone river bank: a trembling
man whose sobs shatter brittle black air.*

—Joan E. Shroyer-Keno

A former Tennessee resident, Joan Shroyer-Keno now lives in Dryden, N.Y., with her husband and three cats. Her poems have appeared in various publications in the United States. Her work will be included in Bedside Prayers, a HarperCollins San Francisco anthology, due out this winter.

East Tennessee State University is one of 46 institutions in the Tennessee Board of Regents system, the seventh largest system of higher education in the nation. The Tennessee Board of Regents is the governing board for this system which is comprised of six universities, 14 community colleges, and 26 area technology centers. The TBR system enrolls 80 percent of all Tennessee students attending public institutions of higher education.

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Frigid Ride

A member of the Old Order Amish near New Wilmington, Pa., heads off to a religious service. Recently, Jeff Behm of New Castle, Pa. has moved even more towards landscapes when photographing the Amish out of respect for their ban on having their pictures taken. The area's non-Amish believe that the stricture is rooted in Biblical prohibition against graven images and idolatry. In fact, according to an Amish elder, the Amish did oblige tourists around the turn of the century by posing for pictures—and they charged for the service. When Amish families began engaging in price wars, the elders put a halt to the practice. It was, they said, fostering ego, pride, and greed. For more of Jeff Behm's photographs, see page 5.



© Jeff Behm, 1990

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